

# GRANDFATHER'S TALES *of* COLONIAL DAYS







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“The door was opened immediately, and Grandfather’s tall figure filled the aperture.”—Page 25



# GRANDFATHER'S TALES OF COLONIAL DAYS

By FRANK H SWEET  
ILLUSTRATED



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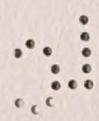


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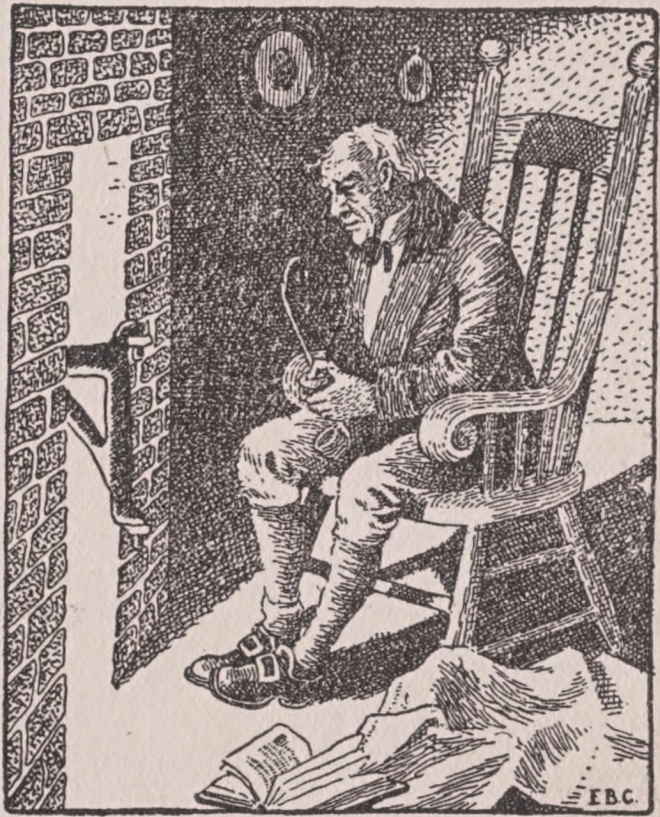






# Story Telling *and* This Book

As the evening shadows gather in the library my mind slips away from our story-reading days to the story-telling ones of years ago, from the electric glare upon the sectional book-



cases to the great farm kitchen with its big fire-place—so big that a farm horse used to drag in the back-log, and so broad that we children gathered upon side benches within its capacious depths on cold evenings. From these benches we could look up through the small square opening of



the chimney's top, sometimes to a bit of star-dotted sky, and sometimes a murky one that dropped snowflakes into the chimney's mouth and down upon our faces; or out into the candle-lighted kitchen where the fireplace flickered soft shadows along the smoke-blackened cross-beams.

On one side of the fireplace was grandfather's chair, where the old man always sat of an evening, sometimes drawing occasional whiffs from his long-stemmed pipe and gazing meditatively into the fire, but more often with the pipe resting across his knees and talking of bygone days. In the chair opposite sat grand-mamma, knitting, smiling, listening, and not infrequently joining in the conversation by telling a story herself—to keep up the girls' side, she would explain whimsically.

Later in the evening father would come in from his completed chores, with perhaps one or two of the older boys, and would draw a chair close up in front of the blaze, and remove his heavy boots and place them upon the edge



of the hearth, and then take off his hat and great coat and lay them upon the floor beside the boots, from which place mother would quietly remove them.

For a time the conversation was likely to be desultory, about the weather, the crops, and the neighbors, perhaps about the small game we boys were snaring in the woods, but in time grandfather was sure to become reminiscent, and for this we young folks waited, patiently or impatiently, as might be our mood. Even father, though he had heard most of the stories many times, from boyhood up, listened with almost as much interest as we youngsters, to whom they were new. The stories were of personal experiences in the second war with England, of hardships in prairie schooners during the early days of westward emigration, memory stories of Revolutionary days that had been told him by his father and grandfather, and even traditional tales of Puritan and Pilgrim times that had come down through the family. Occasionally



something in his reminiscence would bring a comment from grandmamma, and perhaps even a story; and at such times as he grew silent we turned to her with almost equal anticipation.

Father was naturally a silent man, and usually listened with only an occasional nod or the briefest of comments; but sometimes, when the kitchen became silent, a fit of talkativeness would seem to possess him, and then we young people listened to stories of the Civil War that made our pulses bound and our nerves tingle. Father had gone in a private and come out a major, and silent man though he was, his mind was stored with what he had heard by camp-fires and on picket.

We young people had few books in those days, and none of the kind that kindle the eyes and hearts of boys and girls in these days of much reading; but we did not need them—we did not miss them. We had our work, our chores, and during certain seasons our school lessons in the early evening. But then would come the fireplace and the desultory



but interesting conversation, and later the stories. And much do I doubt if the most thrilling of the modern book stories linger longer in the memories of their young readers than did those strong but homely fireside tales in ours.

\* \* \* \* \*

So now as I watch the electric glare upon the sectional bookcases, and realize the countless boys and girls who are depending upon such books as they contain for a knowledge of the stories that are connected with the building up of the country, the adventures and hardships and heroism of the frontier, the seacoast, the wresting of Independence from England, and the preservation of the Union from inside foes, it comes over me that here is the pleasant task, the duty even, of preserving some of the fireside stories, the brawn and heart, as it were, of the country's establishment and growth, for these young students of their country's romance and history.



The pleasure of the work, not task, will be rather in the choosing of stories than finding them. Every hill and valley, every harbor and waterfall and old house almost, has its traditional story of heroism or endurance or intrepidity. The native villager and country dweller delight in telling them, and in the hearts of their children is an emulation to like deeds of daring.

If in the telling of these stories I can awaken in the hearts of the young book-readers something of the same enthusiasm and breathless interest that was mine when I sat in the chimney corner listening to the white-haired grandfather or grandmamma, or to the strong, self-contained man who had followed Grant to Richmond, I will feel richly repaid.

FRANK H. SWEET.

Waynesboro, Virginia.





# GRANDFATHER'S TALES of COLONIAL DAYS

## INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER



IN the brave days of the country's early growth it was the strong, fearless men who did the things that made Independence and progress possible, and naturally it was such of these same

strong, sturdy pioneers and soldiers as escaped the dangers they dared who grew to a ripe old age and finally occupied the revered family chairs in the chimney corners.



From these chairs have come down our family traditions and stories, tales that have entered into our hearts and memory and are to us as no other tales can be. What our grandfather has told us about himself and about his father and grandfather becomes a part of our heritage, and in no small measure helps to shape our thoughts and lives.

In these Grandfather stories I have kept in mind such traits as went into the building up of the country, and have been careful to include only those that belong to its romance and history. Grandfather's time was the stirring time of conquest, the pushing forward into primeval forests, the exploring and bridging of strange streams, the braving of hostile Indians and wild beasts, and the maintaining of what had been built up and conquered from the covetous grasp that sought to possess it.

Even in the sturdy work of hewing the country from the wilderness, the land was



overrun by the invader. Red coats swarmed in from the sea coast, marched overland through the interior, and everywhere among the patriots found discontents—Tories—to sympathize with and assist them.

This made it doubly hard for the Patriots—foes within and without. With one arm they had to maintain their homes, and with the other to secure its freedom and liberty. How they did it is exemplified in these selected stories of bravery and patriotism. There are hundreds of other stories, just as patriotic and as full of fearless deeds, still told about the firesides of the thirteen Colonies and treasured in the hearts of the descendants of the Revolutionary heroes.

Strange, indeed, is it for a man to be hungry, and then to live to tell the story to his loving grandchildren about the fireside; so our first tale shall be of

A STURDY PATRIOT.









## A STURDY PATRIOT

PEOPLE seldom boast of an ancestor who was hanged, but in our family we carefully keep green the memory of our great-great-grand father whose neck wore the noose.

Hitherto this story has been an unwritten tradition, dear to children, and those who have told it by winter firesides have differed as to who did the hanging.

Some writers have accused the Hessians, who, after the battle of Long Island, penetrated beyond Jamaica in search of horses; but the crime undoubtedly belongs at the door of the British Colonel Simcoe. who commanded a famous corps of Light Horse Rangers.



This corps was quartered at Oyster Bay in 1776, and made forays through Long Island. They were the best mounted body of horsemen in either service, and at this time were preparing for their great ride through northern New York.

Only one great highway was open from north to south on the west side of Long Island, and rebels and royalists alike were forced to use it. Naturally the farm-houses were placed near this road.

Messengers came this way after a stealthy fashion on fleet horses, bringing General Washington's appeals for the horses and provender which his little army required. The prosperous ancestor of our family had twenty fine saddle horses and abundant forage ready to offer to the patriot cause. Daily at this time great-great-grandfather waited a summons to deliver the animals, and he had resolved that no soldier of King George should ever saddle



one of these high-bred creatures, which he had devoted to the struggle for Independence.

Before daybreak, one morning in that famous year of 1776, after the leaves had begun to fall and the days were growing short, a trusty messenger rode up from the neighborhood of Oyster Bay. He brought word that the Rangers were out in search of horses, and were then rapidly approaching the farm.

Grandfather had been expecting this announcement. The oats and corn were in bags ready for transportation, and hidden within an adjacent wood, but the priceless horses were harder to conceal.

The tired scout had ridden fast through the darkness, and when he reached the door he feared to knock, not knowing but the night might conceal some enemy within hearing. Tethering his horse, he climbed to the cornice of a window in the lower story, and reaching thence, tapped gently at the shutterless pane



above. The sash was opened, and the man saw the tall form of our grandfather in the dim light.

“You have not a minute to lose!” the spy whispered to him. “Get your women into some safe place, and hide your horses and cattle. Simcoe’s Light Horse are out. They must be close at hand!”

Our grandfather pushed his big shoulders out of the narrow casement till his sturdy, intelligent face came close to the messenger’s.

“All right,” he said; “everything is planned. We will do what we can. Is this the end of your ride? Can you take my wife and baby over to Dosoris Mills?”

“I can do that, squire,” said the scout, respectfully. “How will you send them?”

“They’ll walk; it will be far easier to avoid observation that way. My wife knows just what to do, and has everything ready.



Lead your horse to the back of the house, and I will open the door."

The scout obeyed quickly, and found his host standing at the back entrance, filling the narrow casement with his great muscular frame.

"There is food in the buttery," he said, "help yourself. I will unsaddle your horse and put him with the rest."

"What are *you* going to do, Squire?"

"I shall send my boy Jim to the deep woods with the horses, where they will scatter themselves well out of reach of the thieves. The provender is safely hidden."

"But you won't stay here alone? You can do nothing against these fellows single-handed. You'll throw your life away."

"Every man in these days must defend his own roof as best he may. You will get my wife safely off, and then, if I can save the horses, the British may do as they like."



“But the boy?”

“Jim has a cool head, and is ready for the service. Simcoe's men will find me here, and I shall keep their attention for a while. That will help to divert them from the boy and the horses. As for the boy, there is no other way; he must go. I am only waiting for his mother to be off before I wake him. Mother and son would find it hard to say good-by.”

At this moment a lady joined them, holding in her arms a young baby and a parcel tied in a linen cloth.

“I am ready, husband,” she said. “I looked in at James, but I did not waken him.”

Her lips trembled, but she had the look of unshaken resolution. Her husband took the bundle, which was not light, and the scout, with an appetite but half-satisfied, made ready to depart.

“I will walk to the edge of the woods,”



said our grandfather, and as they went forward he gave his final instructions to his wife.

“Wait for a direct message from me before you try to come back. Trust in God, and do not waste strength in imagining dangers. It will all be quickly over, I am sure. They may be here in an hour.”

He strode on to the edge of the forest, where he stooped his huge figure, gave his wife a quick but not untender kiss, and returned rapidly to the house. There he ran swiftly upstairs, and called sharply to his boy: “Jim, Jim, they are coming! Mother is on her way to Dosoris. Don’t lose a minute. Get some bread and meat as fast as you can, while I saddle Grey Friar. Hurry more than you ever did before in your life, my boy!”

Jim’s small, wiry figure seemed to disown his large-limbed, grandly proportioned father, but his movements had the fire and speed of the best horse in the stables. In a short time



he was ready. The father handed half a loaf of bread to the boy after he was in the saddle.

“Put that in the breast of your jacket. You’ll be hungry. Drive the horses gently forward. Don’t hurry or frighten them; let them take their own way. They will naturally fall into a string in the narrow wood-path and let them scatter as they choose.

“They will keep near the water after they get to the big brook, for there is short, sweet grass there still. Tether Grey Friar near the old chestnut-tree, and you climb as high as you can. You’ll get a full view of the road for a long way. Don’t try to follow or watch the horses; keep your attention on the road and the house.”

He paused, and Jim said, “Yes, father.” My grandfather reflected a few moments before completing his instructions.

“If you see the Rangers come and go, come home as soon as you think it is safe.



If you see fire and smoke this way, don't try to come here, but go to Deacon Goodwin's on foot through the woods as fast as you can. If the soldiers should, by any chance, follow you into the wood, loose Friar at the first hint, and keep very still in the tree-top. And," he spoke more slowly, "if you come back and don't find me, go at once to the Goodwins'. The deacon will tell you what to do in that case."

The boy suddenly leaned from the saddle and put his all too short arms about his father in silence. Then winking his eyelids rapidly to shake off the tears he could not keep back, he sat stiffly upright, while the stable doors were thrown open and the gay horses trooped out. As they passed near him, their owner struck a resounding blow on each bright flank, and sent them toward the open bars with quickened speed.

The plan so successfully set in motion left



the planner face to face with a future no man could foretell.

When he lost sight of Jim's slim little figure on his big horse he straightened himself, stretched his arms as weary men do, and turned toward his tidy but primitive stables with a stern and nervous look upon his usually calm face.

First he put up the bars, and closed up the windows and doors of the outbuildings. Then he drew an evergreen bough in various directions over the paths to obliterate the hoof-prints of the horses. An Indian would not have been deceived, but to an ordinary eye no trace was left of trampling feet.

Returning to the deserted house, his heavy footfalls seemed to awaken unfamiliar echoes, and he found it hard to keep within doors as he had decided to do until his enemies should appear.

The short autumnal day was past noon be-



fore any sound disturbed him. Then he heard the tramp of many horses.

Advancing at a sharp trot, Simcoe's Ranger's halted suddenly before the gate. If ever he were wont to pray, it became him well to do so now; but of his whole life this episode is all we know, and whatever his soul did secretly, God alone understood.

He walked to the wide old door, placed his flint-lock gun within easy reach, and waited. With his sword-hilt an officer knocked violently:

"Open, in the king's name:" he commanded in a loud voice.

The door was opened immediately, and grandfather's tall figure filled the aperture with an unfaltering steadiness and a fine bearing which took the officer by surprise, and caused him to lower his tone to one of greater respect:

"We are here as servants of King George,



and we summon you to give us aid against his enemies. We are in pressing need of horses and forage, and know that you have both at your command. How many horses can you give us?"

Grandfather looked beyond the officer who addressed him, and saw that at least fifty well-armed men were looking eagerly toward him.

"I owe no allegiance to King George, nor acknowledge any claim of his upon my property," he said, defiantly, "but as you are fifty against one. you can take what you can find."

The officer looked up at the towering figure before him, with incredulous surprise.

"You must hold your life cheap," he said, angrily. "Sergeant, detail ten men to guard this rebel while we search the premises."

Grandfather's right hand reached out eagerly for his gun, but the futility of trying to



defend himself was too apparent. He dropped his arm and stood immovable, while ten of the marauders rode inside the gate, and gathered close around the door.

Dismounting about half his men, the commanding officer, himself remaining in his saddle, led the way to the rear of the house.

Terrible as the crisis was, grandfather could not repress a grim smile as he heard doors and windows slamming, and oaths and shouts of disappointment telling of the discomfiture of his enemies. He even heard them let down the bars of the fence.

Would they go to the woods? No—it was as he had presumed—they would not venture on such doubtful ground. At best they could advance only in single file, and knew not what danger might lie in ambush in the forest.

Furious to find not enough forage even to give their horses a noontide meal, and well aware that their loss was General Washington's



sure gain, the entire party gathered about the man who had defied and outwitted them.

It was decided to put him to death as a traitor, and grandfather heard them discussing the best means to execute their purpose.

The rascally traitor was unworthy of a soldier's death, they said. He should lose his life in the most ignominious way they could contrive. They would hang him with one of his own halters and leave him, a scarecrow to every rebel on the island!

A large wooden spike had been used in the rough carpentry of the time, to attach the door frame firmly to the house. After binding grandfather's strong wrists behind him, they slipped the ready noose over his heroic head, tightened the rope, and attached the end of it securely to the spike.

Thus strangled, he became almost instantly unconscious, and with many a mad jeer the British soldiers rode away and left him.



Meantime, poor little Jim had grown wofully weary. At long intervals he crept, squirrel-like from the tree-top, and took a drink from the clear spring, but for the greater part of the time he sat on a limb and watched.

The sweet odors of the wood rose up to him on the moist salt air, and the brook babbled cheerfully below him, but he on his high perch grew stiff and strained, until with a sudden start he saw the Rangers in the distance.

He could see them plainly pushing forward down the road, and halting before the dear home door. His heart beat fast and hard, and he clung tightly to the tree. When they came near the house, its big roof hid them from his sight.

Half-dead with fear, he watched and listened for he knew not how long, but at last he saw the soldiers ride away. His overstrained faculties were benumbed, and he hardly trusted



his own eyes, but he slid to the ground as soon as it seemed safe to do so, and mounting the horse, turned its willing head toward home.

He rode fast but cautiously, and not a child before or since carried with him a more awful dread. The bars were down before him, and in every outhouse doors and windows stood wide open, but not a sound was heard. The house stood desolate, and solemn before him.

“If you come back and do not find me—”  
Oh! had that came true?

He jumped from his horse and tied him to the fence, and then stole cautiously toward the front door. He lived to be more than ninety years old, but the memory of what he saw then never grew dim.

In the pleasant doorway, where his mother used to sit on summer days and spin, hung the dear figure of his father. The face was swollen and purple, and the eyelids were half-



opened over awful-looking eyes, and his hands were tied behind his back.

At first Jim started to run away, but then a longing, so strong that it overcame fear, made him go forward and touch the fettered hands.

They were warm and pliant, though dreadfully discolored. Jim felt an urgent impulse to free them. With a painful effort he squeezed past the heavy form, and



Jim on the way for help



with his pocket-knife sawed at the rough cords, until one parted and the hands fell heavily forward.

Their motion was worse than their rigidity. Jim covered his face and stood trembling, and unable to pass out as he came in; he could not touch them again for all the world contained.

He ran through the kitchen, unlocked the door, and came again to the front of the house. All at once he saw that his father was not suspended by his neck. His feet touched a step. His great weight had strained heavily upon the cord, and his extraordinary height had helped him also. Some slight portion of his body was sustained by resting on the step below the sill.

Could it be that he still lived?

“Father,” Jim shouted, “I am going for help.”

He sprang on Grey Friar's back, and



galloped madly down the road. The force of his agony entered into the man he sought, and the nearest neighbor did not wait for his own beast, but taking Jim's place, spurred Grey Friar back, with the child clinging behind him.

The alarm sent forward, others followed soon, and with tenderest care the ghastly figure was released and laid softly down in the narrow passageway. With eager anxiety the rescuers scrutinized the wounded throat and blackened face. The neck was not broken! The body was warm! Yes, yes, the heart fluttered faintly; he was yet alive!

The time came, when, with the marks of his martyrdom upon him, grandfather stood at his gate and received from General Washington himself the thanks he so richly deserved. Jim then led out the horses, one by one, and delivered them with his own hand to the quartermaster, glowing with a pride which repaid him tenfold for all his pain.



And this story of our great-great-grandfather who was “too tall to be hanged” has ever been a favorite with the long-legged boys who are his descendants.







## VAN BIBBER'S LEAP

JUST below the Falls of Kanawha, in West Virginia, there is a lofty and overhanging rock of immense size, which to this day goes by the name of Van Bibber's Rock; and the incident which thus designates it is one of the wildest and most exciting to be found in the records of colonial adventure.

The rock juts out about a hundred feet over the seething whirlpool at the foot of the falls, at a height of nearly a hundred feet above the water. The immediate surroundings are wild and picturesque in the extreme; though the opposite shore is comparatively level, being covered with pastures, meadows and timber, and



having a gently shelving beach of sand sloping gradually out into the boiling waters, which continue their disturbed and riotous character for many rods below.

Hiram Van Bibber, an enterprising backwoodsman from the eastern part of Virginia, was the first to build a cabin upon this inviting bank of the Kanawha, in the latter part of the eighteenth century.

Having had much experience, and being a bold and independent character, he lost no time in bringing his young wife and two children to the new home that he had provided for them.

Notwithstanding that the region about swarmed with Indians, he was unmolested for a year or more; and the land was so fertile that it was not long before a little settlement sprang up, which, with Van Bibber at its head, presented quite a village-like appearance, the settlers building their cabins near together as a mutual protection against the savages.



A small Government supply station was also established, a few miles further down the stream, which added greatly to the general sense of security and repose. Still the wild and rocky region, which included the opposite bank, continued to be occupied by roving bands of red hunters, who, if not actually hostile, often cast glances of sullen discontent and jealousy upon the fairer portion of their ancient heritage, which the industry and enterprise of the pale-face intruders were swiftly causing to blossom like the rose.

Captain Van Bibber was the soul and heart of the little settlement. His renown as a hunter was only equalled by his reputation for fair-dealing and patriotism; and from the first he was looked upon by his neighbors as their natural leader.

The only other member of his household, besides his wife and three children, was a great pet bear called Brownie, which he had captured



when a cub, and so thoroughly tamed that it was accustomed to following him, unmuzzled, among the cabins like a dog, apparently with no inclination to rejoin its kind among the neighboring hills.

Indeed, the brute displayed an exceptional affection for him and his family. The officers and soldiers of the little fort often came to witness its tricks and pranks; and "Van Bibber and his bear" was the expression most generally used by outsiders alluding to our hero.

It was at the low tide of the Colonies' fortunes, and two of Van Bibber's brothers had crossed into Pennsylvania to join Washington at Valley Forge; and his oldest son, scarcely more than a boy, had followed them with his parents' solemn consent. Many times Van Bibber himself felt an almost uncontrollable impulse to hasten to the assistance of the dwindling army at Valley Forge; but his wife and small children were here in this lonely valley, with roving Indians all



about and the duty to them seemed more imperative.

But the British were already overrunning the country, with predatory bands of them penetrating even into this wilderness in search of horses and cattle, and not infrequently burning houses and torturing inmates whose relatives or friends were in the Continental army. Two or three settlers in Van Bibber's neighborhood had been caught carrying supplies to Washington, and murdered, and there were rumors that Van Bibber himself was marked for early punishment.

This, however, did not prevent Captain Van Bibber from setting out upon a lonely hunting expedition, one April day, in which the adventure befell him that was to give his name to the giant rock, which, until then, had been known by its Indian name, War-kun-gee-tah, signifying the "Far-away lookout."

A great freshet had so flushed the Falls of the Kanawha that he did not venture to cross the



river at the point directly below the rapids, and just between the settlement and the great rock. He passed down the stream for a mile or more to a lonely cabin, occupied by a settler named Radcliff, where he borrowed a canoe and effected a crossing.

He had capital sport, and shot a number of deer and wild turkeys, which he secreted to await a conveyance to his home, when the subsiding waters should enable him to make another trip on horseback, for that purpose.

It was towards the middle of the afternoon when he started to return home, from which he then found himself about eight miles distant. Up to this time he had not encountered a single red coat, or even any signs of their being in his vicinity.

But he had no sooner quitted the belt of timber in which he had been hunting, and begun to make his way across the broad, rolling and somewhat broken plateau, that lay between him





"A shot from a concealed  
foeman."

and the precipitous river-bank, than a shot from a concealed foeman whistled through his squirrel-skin hunting-cap.

He at once crouched close to the ground and prepared for fighting. But another and yet another shot followed the first, in quick succession; and upon peeping up from his covert, he saw a score or more of soldiers cautiously but rapidly approaching

from different points of the forest.

He knew them to be Hessians, from their costumes, and therefore understood that nothing



but his life would satisfy their murderous intentions.

They had him almost surrounded; there was nothing to do but to run for life; so on bringing down the foremost by a well-directed shot, Van Bibber suddenly sprang to his feet and sped over the open plain, escaping the numerous shots that were sent after him, as if by a miracle, and with the entire lot in yelling and bloodthirsty pursuit.

Van Bibber was a famous runner, however, and was under no apprehension of being overtaken by his enemies, swift of foot as they undoubtedly were. He had long been noted as the strongest, fleetest and most formidable hunter of the Kanawha Valley, and nobly did he vindicate his reputation on that eventful day!

He not only acquitted himself so creditably as to keep keyond the range of the poor rifles, with which his pursuers were armed, but was also enabled to load and fire as he ran, thus causing several of them to bite the dust before they



finally drove him to bay, out upon the furthestmost point of Wah-kun-gee-tah, the great, jutting rock overlooking the terrible whirlpool at the foot of the falls, and his humble but smiling home on the opposite bank.

Though unable to overtake their fugitive, the soldiers had succeeded in baffling all his attempts to reach the river at the point at which he had effected a crossing in the morning. They had so managed to dictate the direction of his flight as to bring him at last to a final and apparently hopeless stand upon the very edge of this tremendous abyss with obviously no choice left him but surrender, or death at their hands,—or an equally fatal plunge into the boiling, cauldron-like whirlpool far, far below.

But even in this desperate strait, Van Bibber did not lose a jot of his cool and collected daring. Sheltering himself behind a small group of stones and bushes, and loading and firing his trusty rifle with wonderful rapidity, he succeeded in



keeping the enemy at bay for more than a quarter of an hour, in full view of his wife and friends on the opposite bank of the river.

The soldiers, though not venturing out upon the open shelf within range of his terrible marksmanship, clustered along the bushy sides, and even crept down far below the very face of the cliff, yelling in the certainty of his speedy capture or death.

Captain Van Bibber suddenly stopped firing, and for the first time, a feeling of despair must have come over him. He had used the last bullet in his pouch, and was no longer capable of defence!

The enemy soon suspected as much, and began to swarm over the top of the rock in full view with revengeful cries.

But at this instant, when he was about giving himself up for lost, a clear, encouraging cry came floating to him from far across the yawning abyss, making itself distinctly heard above



the roaring of the waters. It was a woman's voice—his wife's,

“I'm coming under the rock in the canoe!” she cried. “Leap, and meet me!”

He turned and looked in the direction from which the summons had come, dazed and bewildered—for such a leap had never been made, nor even contemplated before.

But the heroic woman was already in the canoe, paddle in hand, having laid her baby on the grassy bank and rushed to the rescue in spite of the opposition of her neighbors, who looked upon her husband as already doomed, and regarded her attempt to navigate the boiling waters of the whirlpool as simple madness.

But she pushed off, and just as she did so, Brownie, the pet bear, clambered into the stern of the canoe, and sat upright upon his haunches keeping his balance perfectly and really aiding not a little in “trimming boat” and ballasting it, as it were, throughout the wild voyage.



As Mrs. Van Bibber succeeded in reaching the centre of the stream, directly under the ledge of the rock, her husband's foes were almost upon him.

"Wife, wife!" he shouted, "drop down a little lower. I'm coming!"

With this, and with the clutches of the enemy almost closing upon him, he sprang from the crag, and descended like a plummet into the water, feet foremost.

In an agony of suspense, his wife rested from her toil for a moment, watching for him to rise to the surface, the canoe bobbing about like a cockle-shell upon the angry flood, and the pet bear eying his mistress affectionately, as though fully sympathizing with her distress.

It was only a moment, but an awful one,—it seemed an age to her. Would her husband ever rise?

Her earnest gaze seemed to penetrate the very depths of the turbid water,—and then,





“Drop down a little lower. I’m coming!”—Page 46







with a joyous, thankful cry, she darted the canoe further down the stream.

He rose to the surface quite near to her, and was able to scramble into the little craft without assistance, amid a shower of bullets, that was poured after him by the baffled pursuers, not one of which, however, harmed either him or his wife.

Then, seizing the paddle from her hands, he swung the craft around, turning Brownie's back to the hostile bank, and paddled swiftly out of range of the shots that were still showered after him.

But it is more than likely that poor Brownie had much to do with the immunity with which his master and mistress were permitted to draw out of range. At any rate, when Van Bibber and his wife reached the shore, and were assisted to land by their rejoicing friends, Brownie remained seated motionless in the stern of the canoe, with his tongue hanging out and his eyes closed.



The bear was found to be stark dead. His back was fairly riddled with bullets, more than one of which must inevitably have reached the human occupants of the canoe but for the chance bulwark that had been presented by Brownie's tough and shaggy frame.

Captain Van Bibber experienced such a shock from his terrific leap that it was many days before he fully recovered. But he and his wife lived to a green old age, with their family around them, in the same fertile valley, and within the very shadow of the great overhanging shelf which has ever since borne their name, in deserved commemoration of Van Bibber's leap.







## CAPTURING A BRITISH SPY

GRANDFATHER picked up a pine stick, of a good grain for whittling, tilted back his chair, opened his horn-handled jackknife, and began:

“Now I am going to tell this in the same words, near as I can, that my grandfather told it to me, more than fifty years ago. So you must imagine it is your great-great-great grandfather Tyler who is talking. Well, one day in seventy-three, I think, he said, father came to me and said, ‘Son Tyler, you seem to have a natural gift for dickering, and you don’t seem to be good for much else. Peddling may be the best thing for you, but I’d rather seen you take to farming, I admit.’



“Such was my father’s candid opinion of me at the age of eighteen. I am disposed to think it was not far from right. Every enterprising boy, it is said, “peddles’ at some time during his life. However that may be, I took to peddling at once.

“I aspired to the grandeur of a two-horse cart; but my father, who was a New Hampshire man removed to Maryland, advised me to be content with one horse simplicity till my ‘wisdom teeth’ were cut. I did not like to start out with one horse, but my father consoled me by giving me for my cart, ‘Plato,’ one of the best horses on our farm.

“It is easy for me now to see what a good father I had. In his younger days, in the old Granite State, he had been a joiner as well as a farmer, and he and I now set at work to build my peddler’s cart.

“It was in the winter, and I did not intend to set out on my first trip until April. We were at



work on the cart for a month. The old gentleman became interested in it, and it was a staunch and thorough piece of work when it was done.

“With money which my father advanced me and a certain sum of my own—the proceeds of previous dickering—I stocked up with tinware, ‘notions,’ and a small line of dry goods and jewelry. Then I started out.

“I succeeded moderately well, and had been peddling nearly four years when I gave it up to join Washington, near Philadelphia. But I only staid with him two weeks, then went back to my peddling. That started an uproar, especially among my own kin. Father didn’t speak to me for months, and one of my brothers said publicly that he’d a good mind to hang me with his own hands as a disgrace to the family and a money-hunting poltroon. You see, people were pretty rabid on patriotism in that neighborhood, and had no excuse for half-way loyalty. But they didn’t know what had passed between



the general and me, and that I was enjoined to absolute secrecy. When great things are at stake it isn't safe to have any one know what's going on unless he is needed to help carry it out, and sometimes even a tin peddler's cart may help change history.

"Well, one night I put up at a tavern about twenty miles out of Baltimore, on my way to Fayette, where a consignment of jewelry and notions awaited me. It was my custom to start with a full cart from Fayette, and return to that city after a trip of seven or eight weeks with an empty one, but with four or five large sacks of paper rags lashed on top.

"I still drove old Plato, and had not yet risen to the eminence of a two-horse cart.

"The tavern in Anne Arundel County, where I put up, was a sufficiently respectable little place, kept by an old Kentuckian. I had often passed a night at the house.

"There were two cattle drovers at the house



this evening. While we were at supper a local politician joined us, and a little later another man arrived, who, it was soon whispered around, was a Major Snowden from Baltimore in pursuit of a noted British spy, who had done more harm to the colonies than any other one man, and for whose capture a reward was offered.

“I wished to reach Fayette early the following morning because I was several days behind my usual time. My goods had been at Fayette for four days already. I had also a note due there which I desired to take up.

“Bearing in mind that the moon rose at a little past twelve o'clock that night, I resolved to take a nap, and get started by two in the morning. I could drive the twenty-two miles to Fayette and arrive in town next day during business hours.

“I went to the dining-room, where the landlord still sat at table with his latest guest, the major, to arrange for my unusually early de-





"I should be glad enough of  
your company."

and pay notes without it, generally,' he  
remarked with a smile.

"That is as it may be,' I replied. 'And as

parture and explain  
my motive for it. This  
I did at some length,  
and I caught the eye  
of the major fixed on  
me in what I thought  
was a peculiar man-  
ner.

"Not a very safe  
ride to take with money  
about you when that  
fellow Given is around,'  
he remarked.

"I've not said I  
had money about me,'  
I rejoined.

"No; but a man  
doesn't go to buy goods



for Given, I guess he wouldn't be out of his bed at that hour.'

"‘Perhaps not,’ said the major. ‘I’d go with you if I thought he would be.’

"‘Well, I should be glad enough of your company,’ I replied. He looked like a cool headed man, and he certainly had a remarkably keen eye. He was a powerful fellow, and at least six feet in his stockings.

"‘There was a shower during the early part of the night, but when I turned out at one o’clock the sky had cleared and the moon had risen. I roused the hostler and assisted him to harness Plato to my cart, which had been backed under a shed near the stable. Then I climbed to my high seat and drove off along the road leading to Fayette.

"‘For three or four miles there were farms. Then came a long stretch of woodland. The road was muddy, and although my cart was not heavily laden, I drove slowly.



“Presently Plato made a sudden leap and the fore wheels of my cart went into a mud-hole in the road, caused by the recent breaking down of a little causeway across it. I was almost unseated, and uttered an exclamation. At the same instant I was certain that I heard another smothered exclamation close beside or behind me!

“As the fore wheels rose from the hole and the hind wheels fell into it, tilting me backward on my seat, I heard something slide backward inside my cart and bump against the tail-board.

“I could feel my heart jump. What was in the cart? Save for a little straw and a few paper rags, the vehicle was empty, I had supposed.

“It occurred to me that I had an uninvited passenger. Perhaps some tramp was trying to steal a ride. But when I thought of the hour I dismissed that surmise. Besides the cart body had been locked. I had a good padlock, with a strong hasp and staple on the drop-door at the back.



No one would have picked or broken that lock merely for the purpose of stealing a ride or taking a nap in the cart. It must be somebody with a bad motive — someone who meant to rob me!

I thought of the drovers and of the local politicians back at the tavern. There was little likelihood that any of these would attempt a robbery whatever might be their other shortcomings. Then I thought of Given, the British spy.

“There had been no further indication that the interior of my cart had an occupant. Perhaps I was mistaken. But I would soon know.

“Winding my reins around the whip-socket, I stepped cautiously down upon the shaft and off into the mud without stopping my horse. Then as old Plato drew the cart along at his customary pace, I drew a pistol which I carried in my hip pocket and stepped in behind the cart.

“The padlock was gone, and the hasp hung behind the staple. As the drop-door always fell



down of its own weight when unlocked, I knew at a glance that it was now held up in place by some device applied from the inside.

“‘Since you are so bent on riding with me, old fellow, you shall go clear to Fayette,’ I thought.

“‘Stuck in a little leather loop on the side of the cart near the hind end was an iron wrench, handle down. Withdrawing it, I quickly placed the hasp over the staple, and then thrust the long, straight handle of the wrench through it. The rattle of the cart in motion prevented the slight noise which I made from being noticeable,

“‘There, old fellow,—whoever you are,—you’ll stay in there till I let you out!’ I said to myself. Then I went ahead, and climbed back to my seat.

“‘I heard nothing for a long time. Meanwhile we emerged from the woods, and came into a well trodden highway. Plato started forward at a trot.



“Then I heard a movement in the cart, followed by a grating, grinding sound, as if force were being applied to the drop-door behind.

“I listened. The sounds continued for some time with brief intervals of silence. I imagined the surprise of the rascal at finding the drop-door fast.

“Suddenly it occurred to me that probably he had firearms, and might shoot through the front of the cart, which was only three-fourths of an inch thick. I slipped down to the foot-board, and pulled one sack of paper-rags forward upon the seat that I had just vacated.

“Presently the grating sounds were succeeded by kicks as if from a boot-heel, and by heavy thumps. The cart body creaked as if some one were pushing inside it with might and main.

“I was not much afraid of its giving way, and I could not help laughing. My old father had put good work into that cart body. The fellow inside at length came to the same conclusion,



apparently; for he relapsed into quiet for some minutes.

“‘Hullo there, peddler!’ the voice from the inside repeated.

“‘Who’s there?’ said I, rising so that my voice would indicate that my head was in the usual place, but drawing down again the instant after.

“‘A man who got into your cart to take a nap. Let me out, won’t you?’

“‘That’s rather too thin,’ I said, rising up again. ‘I’m going to take you to Fayette with me.’ I dodged down again, and whipped up old Plato.

“My passenger continued to hail me, asking to be let out, but for some time I did not reply. At last he fell into a fit of violent rage, cursing me and threatening me with death in direct forms. I drove on as fast as I could.

“After one particularly vehement hail, I rose up to say, derisively, ‘Oh, you finish your nap!’



“I had barely time to duck down my head, when, bang! went the muffled report of a pistol inside the cart, followed by a second, third and fourth shot in quick succession.

“The villain was trying to shoot me in my seat! Powder smoke gushed out at the holes made by the bullets in the hickory board, but the balls stopped in the tightly packed rag-sack.

“It occurred to me to practise a ruse upon him in order to prevent more shooting. I groaned several times, and cried out, ‘I’m a dead man!’ in a distressed tone. Plato trotted on rapidly.

“Presently my passenger began crying, ‘Whoa!’ thinking probably that I had fallen off and that Plato was going on of his own accord. I gave Plato a poke with my whipstock, and he trotted on.

“For half an hour the man continued to shout, ‘Whoa!’ in tones first coaxing, then authoritative. The horse pricked his ears at



times, and slackened his pace, but at a poke from my whipstock trotted on again.

“Finding that he could not stop the horse, the man braced his feet against the top of the cart body, with his back on the bottom, and tried to burst it off. But the dove-tailed oak frame and iron bolts were too much for him.

“For a long time he toiled and grunted vainly at his task, pausing at times to cry, ‘Whoa! Whoa!’ Meanwhile we approached within three miles of Fayette, and it began to grow light. Now I heard a sound from within the cart which startled me. The fellow was trying to cut his way out with a pocket-knife. The hickory boards were hard; but if he had a good knife he could whittle his way out in time. Therefore, I started up Plato.

“We now went on at a run. The pace and the motion probably disturbed the fellow’s operations. Perhaps he thought the horse had taken fright and was running away. He shouted, ‘Whoa!’ again and again. But I kept my horse at speed,



entered the outskirts of the town, and headed for a tavern where I had sometimes put up.

“It was now quite light, and as I turned into the tavern yard I was not sorry to see two hostlers engaged in washing wagons.

“Getting down, I went back to the hind end of the cart, and tapped on the trap-door.

“‘Where am I? Let me out!’ cried the prisoner.

“‘Oh, we’ve come to a good safe stopping place,’ I replied. ‘And I’ll let you out in good time.’

“‘Who are you?’ he exclaimed vaguely.

“‘The peddler,’ said I. ‘Same one you thought you had shot. And mind you, my pistol is all ready for you. You had better lie quiet till I am ready to let you out.’

“Hearing this curious dialogue, the two hostlers came to see what was going on.

“‘One of you run for Captain Thorne,’ I said, ‘and the other get an axe or gun, and stand by me here. I’ve got a queer bird inside my cart!’



“In the course of fifteen minutes, during which my man remained very quiet, the captain arrived. Several other men had come out from the tavern, As I briefly told my story the bystanders grinned.

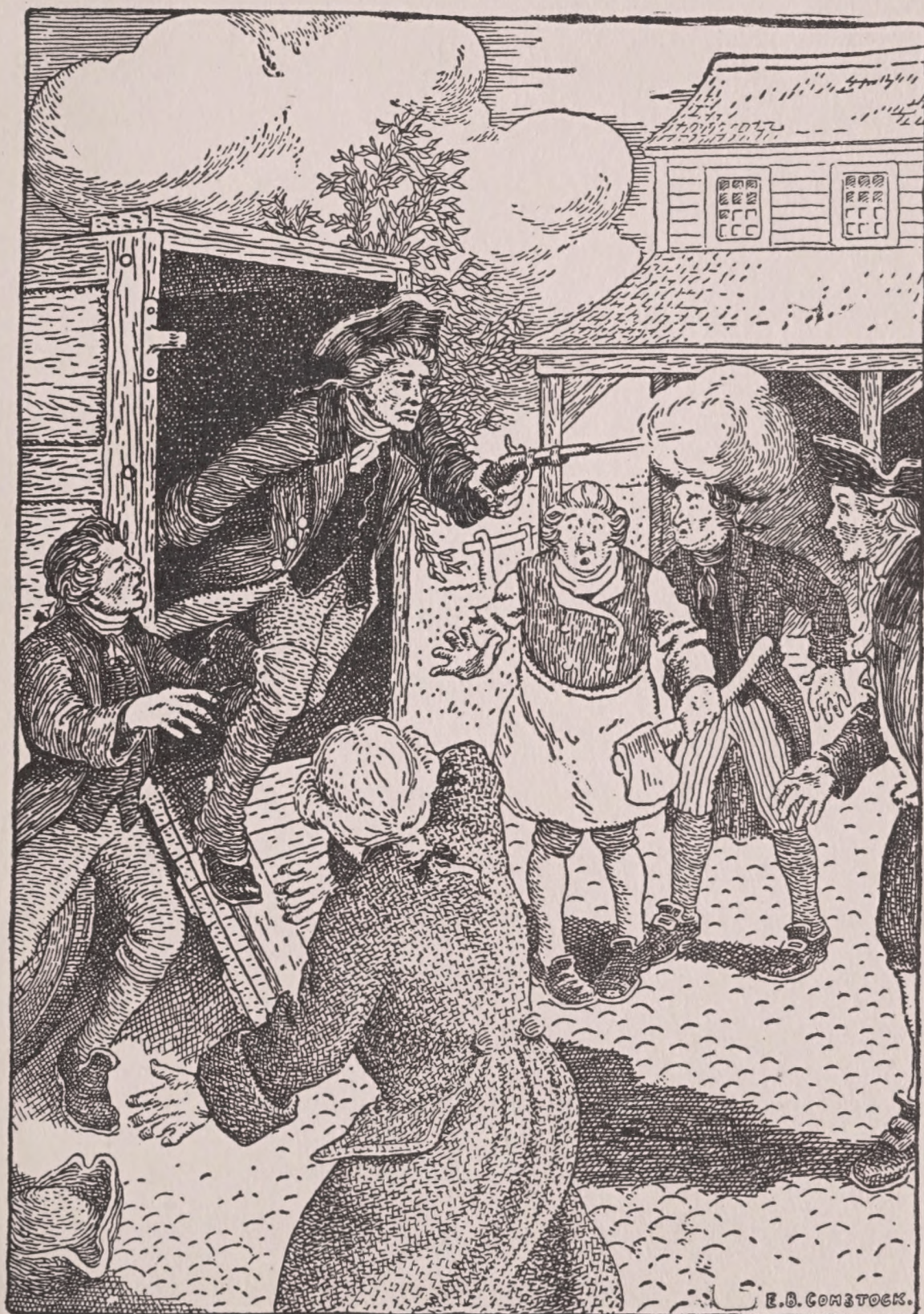
““Let down the door! said ~~the~~ captain. ‘We’ll see what you’ve got.’

“I reached over the hind wheel from one side and let down the drop-door. It had no sooner fallen than a pistol flashed, and my passenger sprang out headlong.

“He struck one hand upon the ground, and would have been on his feet in a moment more, for both the captain and all the others had jumped back, had I not improved my position of advantage behind the spy to dash in and seize him. He tried to turn and shoot me, but the captain had him by the collar next moment, and after a sharp scuffle he was overpowered.

“I then perceived that our prisoner was none other than the major from Baltimore whom I had met the previous evening, and who had





"My passenger sprang out headlong."—Page 66







advised me to be on the lookout for Given, the British Spy.

“Drawing Thorne aside, I hurriedly told him this.

“‘But that isn’t Major Snowdon of Baltimore,’ exclaimed Thorne. ‘I know him very well. Unless I’m greatly mistaken this is Given himself!’

“During the morning the prisoner was fully identified as Given. The wily rogue had craftily passed himself as Major Snowdon in pursuit of Given.

“At his trial, he admitted that his object in secreting himself in my cart had been to rob me of secret dispatches which he had discovered I carried.

“Of course this let my secret out; but while it impaired my usefulness to General Washington in a measure, it suddenly changed my position as a disgrace in the family to the more agreeable one of hero.”





## COLONEL ALLAN'S "MINUTE-MAN."

It chanced that the schoolmaster, Mr. Burns, came to tea and spent the evening with us, the day after our first bean-picking, and the next evening (Saturday) a young couple came to the old Squire to be married, so that we did not get to work on the rusted beans again till the following Monday evening.

But none of us young people had forgotten the promised story; and as soon as we were all gathered round the table, with the white cloth on it, and the beans were poured out, a quart before each picker, and grandmother had put



her "specs" on, and the old Squire had wiped and put on his, Addison spoke up for us all,—

"Now, grandfather, give us that story."

"Let's see, what story was it?" said the old gentleman, though no doubt he remembered well enough, only he did not want to begin too readily, or else wanted to see if we remembered.

"How old Col. Allan and his boys, William, Mark and John, got the advantage of the British in Passamaquoddy Bay," was the unanimous reply.

"I tell you these stories of Col. Allan and his family," the old Squire began, "because he was a man I admire. He was an earnest patriot, one who would sacrifice everything, even his own life, for his country. That is the kind of men we need in America, and I wish every American boy had the heart to make just that kind of a man. He was a man of strict truth and honor; his word was truth itself.

"Everybody on the frontier, Indians as well



as whites, knew that when Col. Allan said he would do a thing, it would be done. The secret of his power and mastery over the Indians was that they knew that he would neither deceive them, nor let others do so. He was also a temperate, a moral, and a God-serving man; one who believed that we have something to do in life; that we have high duties to perform, and that our truest happiness lies in doing those duties at whatever cost. I could desire nothing better than that every American boy would take Col. John Allan as his model.

“As I have told you, the British both feared and hated him, for they considered him a traitor to the King, as they did Washington and all our leaders in the Revolution. If taken, he would have been hanged no doubt, and many were the plots and traps laid to capture him. But this did not prevent the colonel from moving around as he chose.

“He had a large barge named the *Minute-*



*Man*, rigged for sixteen oars and a sail, and mounting a small swivel gun. In this barge he patrolled Passamaquoddy Bay, which is, as you know, at the extreme eastern corner of Maine, his object being to harass the enemy and damage him as much as possible. For war, you know, is the opposite of peace; war means both destruction of life and destruction of property. The English had a great many war-ships, and a number of these were constantly cruising about Passamaquoddy Bay. The colonel and his little war-barge had some very narrow escapes from being captured by them.

"One morning, having gone out with only his three boys, William, Mark and John, the wind being fresh, he hoisted sail and stood up through Lubec Channel into the bay, to see what the enemy were about. Scudding along to where the main expanse of the Bay came into view, William stood up for a look all around.

"What do ye see, Billy?" said the colonel, who was steering.



““A big British ship of war at anchor over towards the ‘head,’ two fishing-boats, and *something* I can’t make out up towards the Narrows.’

““You take a look, Mark,” said the colonel. ‘You’ve got pretty good eyes.’

Mark stood up.

““It’s a big raft of lumber, sir!’ he exclaimed. ‘I can see the fresh sawn deals, and there’s a crew of men on it, fifteen or twenty of them, sir.’

““Load up old Tige, Billy,’ said the colonel and at once headed the little *Minute-Man* for the raft.

““Old Tige’ was the swivel gun, a small cannon carrying a four-pound ball fixed on a pivot in the bow of the barge.

““But, father, there’s the big Britisher off there, a sixty-gun ship. We’ll have to run up past her to tackle that raft.’

““Never mind her, boy. She’s anchored, hitched hard and fast to the bottom.’



"But there are her launches, father."

"Why, boy, are we afraid of a British launch?" cried the colonel.

"William was ramming a charge into the swivel, and meantime the saucy little *Minute-Man* stood boldly up past the big frigate and headed straight for the raft, which was being slowly worked down out of the St. Croix River. There were twenty lumbermen on it, about half of whom were armed with muskets. For it was a very large and valuable raft, containing not less than five hundred thousand feet of logs and deals piled on the logs. Counting on the proximity of the British frigate, the raftsmen had entertained no fear of the Americans.

"But the little barge stood straight up towards them, and with a fresh and very stiff breeze in her sail, was rapidly nearing them. In five minutes it had come up within half a mile.

"Now Billy," cried the colonel, "bear a hand at the tiller here! You, Mark, and Jack, stand by the sheets, while I take a shot at 'em!"



“It was difficult to get aim, with the barge careening smartly and dashing ahead. But when the colonel blew the match, a four-pound ball ran skipping along the tops of the waves, and bounded over the big raft so close down to the heads of the raftsmen that they all threw themselves flat down on the deals, and one man was seen to jump overboard.

“‘Another powder cartridge, Mark!’ cried the colonel, warming up to his work as gunner. ‘And pass me another four-pound ball while you are about it. Steady there, Billy! Mind your helm, boy. Pass the match, Mark.’

“‘Bang!’” again spoke the little swivel; and this time a board flew up from the raft; this last ball had grazed the top of the deals. By this time a panic had fallen on the raft’s crew. Some of the men were shouting,—

“‘*Ship ahoy! Frigate ahoy there!*’ hoping to get assistance from the man-of-war; others were objurgating the *Minute-Man*, and firing



off their muskets; but with the colonel's third ball, they all took to their *bateaus*, which were in tow of the raft, and pulled for the New Brunswick shore as fast as they could.

"Steady, now, Billy!" cried the old Colonel. 'Lay her alongside the raft. Be ready to let go that sheet, Mark.' In another minute the barge was bumping the leeward side of the great raft; and the colonel, seizing an axe, jumped aboard it.



Breaking up the raft.

"Such lumber rafts are usually fastened together with cross-poles and pins, or else with warps; and the colonel's practised eye was not



long discovering where to plant his blows to break it up. With the assistance of Mark and William—while John stood by the barge—he was not many moments cutting off every cross-pole; and then almost before they could leap back into the barge, the great mass of lumber began to dissolve beneath their feet and float off in all directions, tossing on the waves and going out to sea with the tide.

“But they had scarcely accomplished this exploit and leaped back into their barge, when *boom!* went a heavy gun, and a round shot from the man-of-war came plunging down into the water off to windward. The frigate had waked up at last!

“‘Tack, and stand away for home, now, boys!’ shouted the colonel.

“‘But, father, look o’ there!’ cried Mark, ‘There comes the British launch round her quarter. See the cutlasses flash!’

“‘There come two of her other boats!’ ex-





"“They’ll catch us this time father.”—Page 82







claimed William; 'full of marines, too; and the launch has a brass gun which they're training for us!'

"'Never mind their gun, boys!' cried the colonel; 'give me the tiller. Stand by the sheet and do as I bid ye.'

"The *Minute-Man* stood off and on, to beat out past the man-of-war's launch and boats; but perceiving his intention, the enemy bore down the bay so far as to soon make it evident that the Americans would be overhauled, before they could double out past the west head, on the Maine shore of the bay.

"'They'll take us, father, off the "head," sure!' exclaimed Mark.

"'Looks like it,' admitted the colonel. 'But never mind, boy; there's more'n one way to do a thing! Stand by and we'll try 'em a race up the bay!'

"Round came the *Minute-Man* and scudded away again. But the launch and boats, fully



manned, were coming on gallantly, and were now within half a mile of the barge; and though the colonel might prolong the race up the bay his capture at the head of it was only a question of time—or at least seemed so. It looked as if the *Minute-Man* had made his last cruise.

“‘They’ll catch us this time, father,’ said Mark dubiously.

“‘Not a bit of it, boy! There’s more’n one way to play with old King George. See that wooded point yonder, on the Maine shore. Head straight for that, then lay her round into the little cove, inside it. There’s deep water in there. I’ve sounded it’.

“The barge’s sail hardly held its own against the oars of the launch and boats, manned as they were by forty or fifty stout British man-of-war’s men; nevertheless, the *Minute-Man* doubled the wooded point and came round into the little cove inside it, a long distance ahead of the launch.



"The water was here ten or twelve feet deep up to within a few rods of the shore; and no sooner was the *Minute-Man* round the point, out of sight of the pursuing boats, than the colonel cried,—

"Off with your jackets, boys, and be ready to swim ashore!"

"At the same moment he struck and lowered the mast, then with a hatchet, knocked a large, six-inch plug out of the bottom of the barge.

"They had barely time to jump overboard and strike out for the shore, when the barge sank out of sight, in ten or twelve feet of water. The colonel and his boys had just enough time to get to cover in the alder bushes, when the three boats came sweeping gallantly round the point, their officers thinking that now, at last, they had the *Minute-Man* in a corner.

"But to their astonishment, no barge was in sight, nor yet any of its crew. The lieutenant in command of the launch rubbed his eyes,



looked again, and then hailed the other two boats. But none of them could even guess what had become of it. The sailors and marines stared and shook their heads in superstitious astonishment. They rowed back and forth for some time; then finding that not so much as a hair of the *Minute-Man* was to be discovered, they pulled back to the frigate.

“Meantime Col. Allan and his sons had lain in the bushes, laughing in their sleeves at the mystification of their pursuers. When the boats were gone, they wrung out their dripping garments and made a short cut for home across the country.

“A few days later the colonel returned, with a party of men and Indians, and raised the *Minute-Man*, which was taken out of the bay under cover of the darkness the following night; and shortly after the enemy were doubly astonished to see the little barge scud into the bay again, as saucy as ever. There was more superstition



in the world then than now; and not a few of the enemy believed that Col. Allan was in league with the evil one, who aided him to appear and disappear in his barge at will."







## THE CAPTURED HESSIAN

IN one of the most beautiful parts of the valley of the Brandywine, not far from where the historic stream curves around the bold bluff of Point Lookout, there stood in Revolutionary days, and still stands, a farmhouse of the good old colonial type. The blue smoke curling upward from its wide chimneys seemed always to savor of the good cheer within, and over its spreading roof the branches of great maples hung. At one side was the orchard, and by its edge wound the lane, to join the road beyond.

One day in October, 1777, the autumn sunbeams sifting down through the leaves of the



maples flickered upon the curly heads and homespun clothes of two boys, who, seated on the great stepping-stone in front of the door, were busily digging in the dust with their bare toes. They were brothers, and their father—whose name, with the date 1760, was cut on the stone beneath them—was a Quaker of the strictest type.

As this was Fifth day, he had ridden off, with his wife behind him, to Birmingham meeting-house, a few miles up the valley, in spite of the danger from roving bands from the British army. The boys were left at home, for the father judged them safer there, especially as a body of Continentals were encamped by the stream below the house.

Suddenly David, the elder boy, dropped a walnut-bur on his brother's toe, then, jumping behind a tree to protect his own feet, he shouted, "Let's feed our chickens. I'll race thee to the barn!"

In a moment two pair of brown legs were



twinkling in the sunlight as their owners spurted toward the great stone barn, hidden from the house by the grove of maples. Past the corn-crib they raced, and up the slope to where the great barn-doors stood wide open, letting in a flood of sunshine on the hay-strewn floor. It was still quite early in the day.

They had reached the threshold nearly abreast when both lads stopped short and stood amazed. Well they might be, for, on a pile of hay just within the doors, lay a red-coat—a Hessian captain, judging from his long boots and his uniform,—sleeping heavily, with his sword and pistols lying beside him.

With one impulse the boys turned and ran, never stopping until they were safe behind the corn-crib, out of sight of the red-coat, should he awake. What could a British soldier be doing in their barn? There could be but one explanation: He must be the leader of a night-foraging party; he must have lain in the barn for a nap



while his men went about the neighborhood. They must have struck the American camp and been driven across the Brandywine, away from their sleeping captain. That would explain the firing which the boys had heard in the night.

They could not allow a Hessian to sleep in their barn, especially as they had seen some of their pet chickens, with twisted necks, lying beside him, ready to be carried off.

What should they do? If they went to the Continental camp for aid, he might awake while they were gone and escape with the chickens.



“Just within the doors lay a red-coat,”



Young as they were, they readily imagined that he would burn the barn, and even the house itself, if there were time, for they never reflected that he would be exceedingly careful to do nothing likely to attract notice from the Continentals.

“Ezra,” said David, “we must get his sword and pistols, and then force him to go down to the camp! It is the only way.”

Little Ezra trembled at the audacity of this proposition but both felt that the case was desperate, and nerved by this they crept stealthily back, until they could again look on the sleeping enemy. Then David, angered by the sight of the murdered fowls, stole the pistols and the sword away from the sleeper's side. He gave a pistol to Ezra, who immediately got as far away from the hand that held it as possible, and kept the sword and the other pistol for himself.

At this juncture the prostrate soldier snored, and the boys, as if pulled by a string, scampered



backward out of the barn. David, tripping over the sword, fell sprawling down one side of the incline, while Ezra rolled down the other. But nothing threatening followed, and after cautiously regaining their weapons, they held a council of war, and decided upon a plan of action.

Again the boys crept softly through the door, and, while David hid himself behind some shocks of corn within the shadow of the corner, Ezra climbed to the hay-mow, having first, to his great relief, hidden his pistol among the corn. He carried with him, instead, a sack half-filled with grain.

Ezra, having reached his post, from which he could slip out of sight in an instant, overturned his load, and a cataract of golden wheat descended upon the unprotected face of the soldier.

In an instant he was awake. Confused and blinded by the shower, he sprang to his feet, groping vainly for his weapons. In a moment he would have been out and away, but David's



voice rang out, sounding, muffled by the corn, like a man's: "If thee moves, I will shoot thee." The captain stopped irresolute. "If thee looks behind thee, or tries to escape, I will shoot thee through the heart. Thee must do just as I tell thee to do. Go out of the door and follow the path to the left, and mind thee doesn't look behind thee!" David stopped, startled at his own boldness.

The Hessian, sullenly obeying, stalked out into the sunlight, followed by David, the sword hitting against his bare legs at every step. Ezra slipped down from the mow, regaining not very joyfully his pistol, and came on behind.

The redcoat felt sure that the mysterious command must be obeyed. Once before he had heard that Quaker "thee," and the memory was most clear, if not most pleasant. When first brought to England from his German home he had, when given over to ale and ale-filled companions, tried to break up one of the peace-



ful meetings of some Quakers. He had a vivid recollection of a young man in a collarless coat, who, following him out of the little meeting-house, had said, "Although it is to the great hurt of my soul, it may be to the betterment of thine, therefore I shall try to drive Satan out of thee," and had thereupon given him such a thrashing that it hurt him yet to think of it.

With many muttered oaths and speculations as to who his captors could be, the Hessian strode along, making no effort to escape, for he heard the clink of the sword, and where it was he felt the pistols must be also.

A strange and most ludicrous picture the trio presented, as they marched one after another down the path toward the river, over the fields where the shocks of corn stood in the golden October sunshine, and the pumpkins lay changing from green to yellow. Down through the rich meadows, shaded here and there by great oaks and tulip-trees, they marched, and through



the spicewood thickets by the waterside. At last they emerged from the bushes into an open grove, beside which rippled the Brandywine. Scattered under the trees were the tents and lean-to's of the Continentals' camp.

No sooner was the queer procession seen than it was surrounded by a laughing, cheering crowd of soldiers, for discipline was not strict in those days, and the merriment was redoubled when the Hessian, daring at last to look around, went wild with rage and chagrin upon discovering the size of his captors.

But David and Ezra were on their dignity, and without a smile they brought the prisoner up to where the gray-haired colonel stood, drawn from his tent by the commotion. David there called out, just as he had heard the soldiers do, "Halt, prisoner! Attention!" He then brought the great sword to his shoulder, and saluted with the pistol, Ezra following suit.

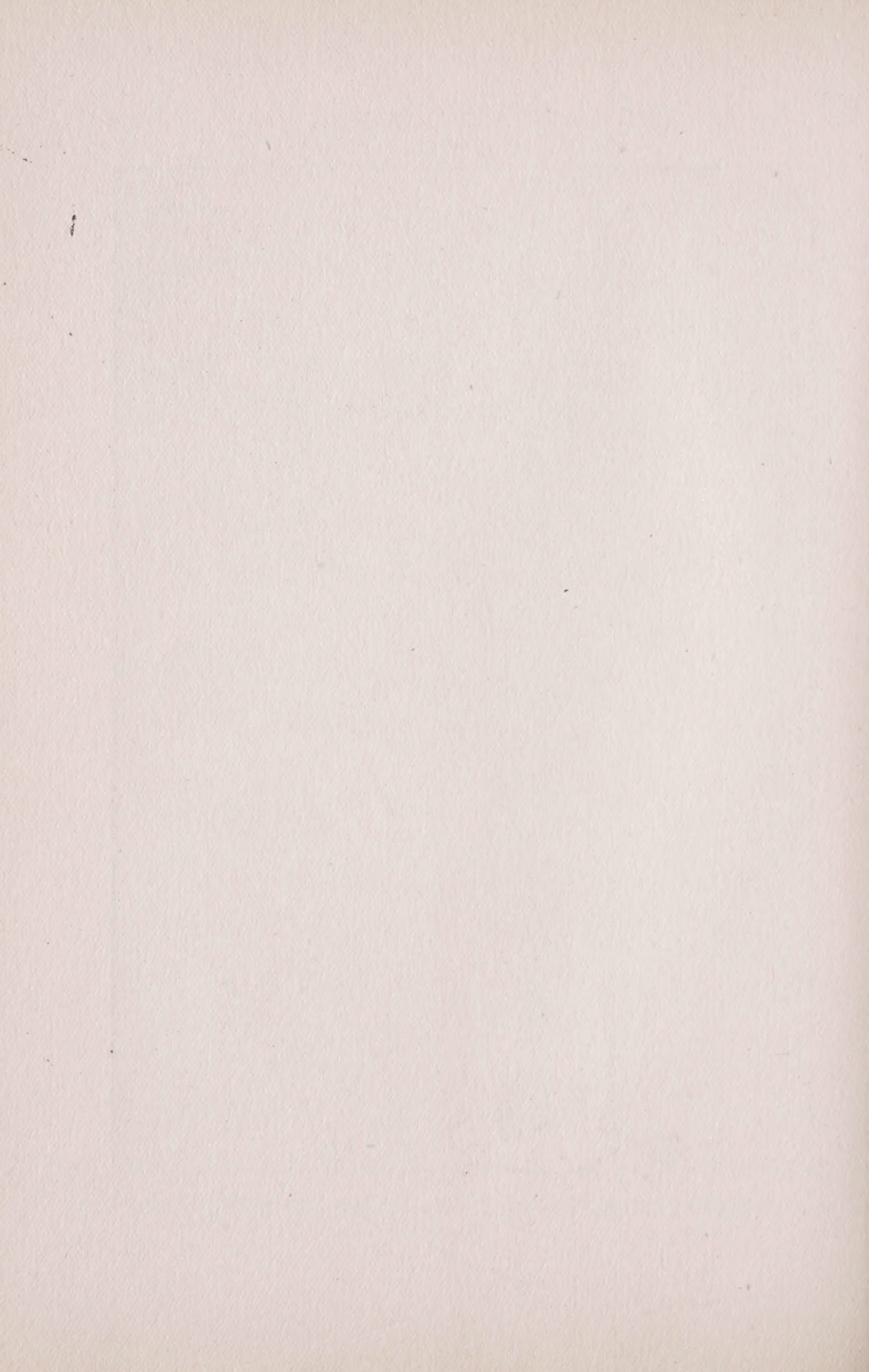
"What is this, boys?" said the colonel, with a





‘A strange and most ludicrous picture the trio presented.’—Page 93







kindly smile. "Have you been raiding King George's camp, and brought back a prisoner?"

"No," answered David, "but, thee sees, this soldier was sleeping in our barn, and had killed our chickens, and probably meant to do more, so we got his sword and pistols, and made him come down here to thee, and—"

Here Ezra broke in: "Thee won't tell mother will, thee? For she would think it was fighting, and then Friend Cope would speak about us in First-day meeting."

Ezra's voice was drowned by a roar of laughter from the circle of soldiers, and the colonel, smiling, promised to make it all right with their mother by going home with them and telling her what brave boys she had, if they would first honor him by taking dinner in camp. At which the boys were struck with pride and embarrassment in a way wonderful to see.

That dinner! The boys looked back to it with pride for the rest of their lives! How they



toasted their country, and Washington and the army, and everything else they could think of, in sweet Delaware cider, and how, much to their own confusion, they were toasted themselves!

But the crowning touch of all came when the Hessian, who had recovered his spirits after a hearty meal, entered, attended by his guards, and begged leave in very bad English to shake his two captors by the hand, and asked permission to present David with the sword and Ezra with the pistols which they had held before under different circumstances, saying, that they were from "vun old soldier to two young vuns." So he was a good-hearted Hessian, after all!

That sword and those pistols, after doing even better service than before for their country in the War of 1812, now hang in an old colonial mansion on the banks of the Brandywine, and many a youth has been inspired to true patriotism by the story of how his ancestors used them in the days gone by.





## A YOUNG PATRIOT'S RUSE

THERE was a new hired man, and grandpa was kept about the barn and carriage-house later than usual, showing the man his duties. Then another half hour was taken up at the supper table. When at last they went back to the sitting room the children's impatience was beyond concealment. They surrounded grandpa in a body.

"Why, why, why!" he exclaimed, throwing up his hands in affected dismay; I won't resist. Take everything I've got."

"It's a story—a Revolutionary story," demanded Harold implacably. "You must give it to us at once, without opposition or question."

"A story—But I thought Grandma—"



"Grandma told hers last night. It's your turn now."

"Oh, well," resignedly, but with a twinkle in his eyes that showed the story was all ready and only waiting to be drawn out. "Let me see. I don't think I ever told you about the awful leap young Demarest took in the dark. No. Well, in May, 1779, "The Patriot Miller" Demarest owned and operated the grist-mill that still stands though abandoned and in a ruinous condition, near Demarest, New Jersey. In the house about one hundred yards away the sturdy miller lived with his two sons and two daughters, within full view of the shadowy woods sweeping up the western slope of the Hudson Palisades.

"At midnight, on the eleventh day of that month of May, the miller was awakened by sounds that he had for many a night expected to arouse him,

"He seized his musket, called his sons Cornelius and Hancomb, and followed by them,



ran quickly down-stairs and out at the back door. This was the third time they had been thus roused to repel the attempts of marauding Royalists to steal their horses.

“This time they were too late to save the animals. The party of marauders had already led two fine horses from the barn, and were in the saddle again when the miller and his sons arrived.

“The two parties perceived each other at the same moment, and fired on the instant. Demarest and his sons were unhurt, but a yell from one of the raiding party showed that he was struck; but they rode away at the top of their speed, leaving the miller and his sons alone.

“Cornelius Demarest was twenty, Hancomb eighteen years of age; both tall and strong. Their mother was dead, and they were principally solicitous for their young sisters, Mav and Lucy.

“The miller had made himself obnoxious to



the British and Tories by frequently furnishing supplies of meal and flour to Washington's army, encamped at the little village of Tappan, a few miles away.

"They expected a return of the party, and soon they were visited again. Shortly after nightfall on the second day after their encounter, Mr. Demarest went to the spring not far from the house to fetch water.

"The boys heard a shout from their father, and rushed out at the door. The mill was on fire. They could see figures moving about in light of the fire.

"'They've got father prisoner. There he is!'" cried Hancomb, pointing to a group where a struggle was going on.

"At that moment there were two quick reports of musket-shots, and both boys fell to the ground and lay prone on the grass not far from the door.

"May and Lucy ran to the door, where they were confronted by a party of troopers. The



leader seized May by the arm, and pointed with a fierce gesture down the sloping lawn.

“‘Out of this. Your brothers are there. They’ve ground their last grist.’

“The party rushed in to complete the work of robbery and destruction. Only one man on guard remained at the front of the house.

“Lucy and May ran to the back where their brothers lay. Trembling with fear, they listened to discover if their hearts were beating, and were overjoyed to find that both were still alive. It was but the work of a few moments to bring Hancomb back to consciousness, for a bullet had barely grazed his skull.

“As soon as he arose to his feet the duty of rescuing his father came back to his mind.

“‘Stay here and keep quiet,’ he said. ‘I’m off.’

“Hancomb leaped the low stone wall at the base of the slope, and crept along in its shadow till he reached the granary, beneath which were



several partially decayed pumpkins. He selected the hardest and moved toward the sentry, keeping in the dark shadow of a group of pines. The noise of the marauders in the house enabled him to approach within a few feet of the guard, who was intently observing the road.

“Carefully poisoning the pumpkin, Hancomb sent it straight at the head of the Tory on guard. It struck true to the mark, broke into a dozen pieces, and laid the trooper senseless upon the grass.

“Hancomb dragged the stunned man within the shadows of the pines, bound him with a halter strap, and gagged him with his own handkerchief as soon as he began to recover breath. Then the boy stripped the trooper of his coat, boots, and accoutrements, and put them on.

“Having secured the hat and musket of his fallen foe, Hancomb rushed to the door to personate the sentry. He shouted:



““Run for your horses! There’s a rescue party coming!”

“The men who were sacking the house instantly ran out in a panic, leaped the fence, and rushed down the road to where their companions and horses were concealed.

“With no definite plan, but trusting to some favoring opportunity to assist his father to escape, Hancomb was first to reach the men with the horses. He jumped upon the nearest horse, and seized the bridle of that upon which his father sat, gagged and bound.

““Forward!” shouted the captain. ‘Prisoner to the front.’

“Away they swept down the dark highway toward the city of New York.

“They had gone but a short distance when the captain, spurring his horse to the side of the miller, seized the bridle opposite to the side upon which Hancomb rode. A fear that he was discovered thrilled through the boy.



“‘Here, you!’ said the captain. ‘See that you keep a tight hold on this bridle, and watch the prisoner’s hands. If we are overtaken, shoot him on the spot rather than let him escape.’

“‘Let me alone for that,’ growled Hancomb, in a disguised voice. ‘I’d like to see the corn-husking rebel escape.’

“With no suspicion of the hidden meaning in the supposed trooper’s reply, the officer, satisfied that the prisoner had a zealous guardian, dropped the bridle, and with a growl at the moon, which was just breaking through the clouds, rode forward.

“Hancomb now felt secure from discovery as long as the general panic continued. He pretended to examine the miller’s bound wrists, and repeated loudly what he had replied to the captain: ‘I’d like to see you escape.’

“The prisoner turned toward his brave son, and the flash of recognition shone in his eye. But he made no sign.





“A blow from the brawny miller’s fist sent the leader reeling from his saddle.”—Page 110







“Fast and furious they sped away, the spark from the horses’ hoofs flashing like a flight of tiny meteors in the darkness. Now and then, as they skurried past a roadside farm-house, a white-robed figure would be seen at a window, wondering what mischief was abroad.

“At the top of a hill the leader called a halt, to listen. But no sound of pursuit was heard.

“‘We’ve shaken them off,’ said the captain, with glee. ‘Forward!’

In the confusion of the few moments’ halt Hancomb had leaped to the ground, put down his head to avoid recognition, and busied himself with the trappings of his horse. At the word ‘Forward’ he rose, and the keen blade of his knife cut through the rope binding the captive’s hands. At the same time he saw that his father bestrode one of the stolen horses.

“Hancomb’s position was becoming more hazardous. Now the leader, feeling secure from pursuit, advanced to the head of the party.



“By adroit maneuvering the Demarests had dropped somewhat to the rear, when a weird sound—now faint, now deep and hoarse—rose above the hoof-beats. It was familiar to the patriots, but appalling to the troopers.

“They drew rein and stood silently listening in a confused and widely separated group.

“Now they were near where stands the present village of Tenaflly, near a deep-lined forest-gorge, in which there is a succession of waterfalls called the “Caulders,” leading up to the Hudson Palisades. Hancomb saw that the opportunity for escape had come. The moon was now hidden, and it was quite dark.

“‘Now!’ Hancomb whispered.

“They managed to face up the road. The miller lashed his horse with his belt-strap, and dashed forward. The captain was between him and liberty, but only for an instant, for a blow from the miller’s brawny fist sent the leader reeling from his saddle.



There was a chorus of yells from the astonished group of troopers.

“‘After him, boys!’ shouted the sergeant. ‘He’s broken the captain’s head. Take him alive, and we’ll roast him for this.’

“‘I’ll take him alive, or die in the attempt,’ exclaimed Hancomb, And before those who were not assisting their leader could recover from the sudden confusion, he galloped after the fugitive.

“‘Soon he was close behind his father. The miller, who had snatched off the gag, turned to his son.

“‘Hancomb,’ he said, ‘we can never keep up this pace; and if we do they will shoot us when we pass back near them round the bend in the road ahead. We must take to the marshes till the troopers pass, then climb the slope to the old Indian trail on the top of the Palisades.’

“‘Yes, it’s our only chance. They’re after us.’



"As the moon broke through the clouds, the crack of a pistol mingled with the hoof-beats. Hancomb was doubtless suspected.

"Another shot. The hat of the young patriot rolled in the dust. A shout went up from the troopers as he was seen to fall forward, as though struck by the bullet. But he had merely thrown himself upon the horse's neck to shield himself as much as possible.

"Next moment the bend in the road was passed.

"Checking the speed of the horses, the miller and his son leaped to the ground just as the pursuers swept round the curve.

"To the left of the road were a few straggling trees, with a moonlit meadow beyond, and then the marshes. To the right was a stream lined with rushes.

"The hillside was echoing to the pursuers' exultant yells, when the Demarests leaped across the road to the right, and were lost to view. The



troopers dismounted with a great deal of uproar. The captain's order to beat the banks of the stream could be heard above the tumult.

“‘Keep close behind me, and in the shadow of the rushes,’ said the miller.

“‘But the rushes end a little way ahead. What shall we do then?’

“‘Strike up the hill-side. It is the only thing we can do.’

“They soon reached a mass of low thick-set bushes, extending for some distance up the side of the hill. From this point they must cross a wide, open space in order to reach the woods.

“They had hardly cleared a third of the distance when a fierce yell showed that they were discovered. On they went, over the thin grass and the smooth outcropping rocks.

“They had nearly reached the edge of the wood when a volley was fired. Then came a shout of triumph as Hancomb was seen to fall.

“‘Son, are you hurt?’ asked the miller.



“‘Not a scratch, father. I stepped into a hole. We’ll give ’em the slip yet. Thank God we have reached the woods. But see! they’re coming.’

“‘Yes. It won’t do to take the trail. We must get down the rocks to the river if we can.’

“After running a few rods homeward they turned east, toward the Palisades.

“This lofty, picturesque wall of igneous rock is familiar enough as seen from the Hudson River. For almost its entire length its top is a narrow, forest-grown plateau, which descends at the west in irregular slopes to the Hackensack Valley.

“The basaltic formation forms groups of huge columns, whose flat upper surfaces sometimes rise one above the other, like steps cut in the rocks. Here and there the giant ridge is indented by steep slopes, clothed with a stunted growth of bushes and small trees.

“Now a noisy confusion of voices came rolling



through the forest. Hancomb, pausing for an instant, heard the command given to search the surrounding underbush where he had fallen. The troopers doubtless expected to find him wounded, and the miller with him.

“They soon found they were approaching the verge of the vast escarpment, at the base of which four hundred feet below them, rolled the Hudson.

“‘That was a lucky fall of mine,’ said Hancomb. ‘It has thrown them off the scent.’

“‘Yes; but we are not out of the woods yet, my boy. Caution’s the word. Keep in the darkest shadows, and be silent.’

“‘Why not go down the first slope we come to, and work up the river?’

“‘We would break our necks. It’s dangerous enough in daylight, doubly so with the cliff in a deep shadow like this. No, that will never do. We’ll strike straight for home. I believe we have shaken off the enemy. No! Good heaven! They’ve got a dog on the trail!’



“The wind brought to their ears the baying of a hound, and the sound was rapidly approaching them.

“To retrace their steps meant capture, at their right was the precipitous wall of the Palisades. From the left the baying of the dog sounded nearer and nearer. Before them stretched an open, moonlit glade, a hundred yards and more in width. They sped forward into the telltale moonlight. Scarcely had they left the shadow of the trees when a party of their pursuers leaped from the woods in hot pursuit.

“Not a shot was fired. It was evident that the intention was to capture the fugitives alive. Weary from their exertions, the Demarests were rapidly gained upon.

“Hancomb was just behind his father. Suddenly he turned to the right, and sped toward the brink of the frightful precipice a hundred yards away.

“Puzzled by this unaccountable movement,



the pursuers slackened their speed. Some ran cautiously in the direction the boy had taken. The hound led the advance.

“For a moment the form of the young hero stood out against the eastern sky. Then after one glance backward, and a longer, steadier look into the gulf before him, he leaped into the air and was gone.

“Next moment the hound, unable



“He leaped into the air.”



to stop his speed, shot forward with a cry almost human, into the dark abyss. He yelled; then there was a faint rattle of dislodged debris, and all was still.

“The spectators, their hot blood chilled by this supreme act, gathered upon the rocky verge and held brief council before they turned and moved slowly up the glade.

“In the meantime the miller, thinking Hancomb not far behind him, had plunged into the dark shadows of the forest. Missing the sound of his son's course through the bushes, the father turned and found himself alone. He had heard no outcry, no shot; and where were Hancomb, the Tories, and the hound?

“The miller retraced his steps with the intention of going to his son's rescue, at the risk of his own life. He saw through the trees the excited group peering over the rocky verge of the cliff. He saw the men turn and disappear in the forest. Then all the world was dark with horror to the patriot father.



“When he looked again the glade was vacant, and nothing was heard save the rustle of the leaves. A white cloud swept into the halo of the moon; to the father’s half-crazed fancy it seemed like the ascending spirit of his son.

“The miller crept toward the precipice, looked down into the awful darkness, and moaned:

“‘Hancomb! O Hancomb!’

“The words had hardly died away when a whisper came up from below, thrilling the already overwrought nerves of the listener. Then he heard a scraping noise, and a black head rose above the edge of the cliff.

“‘All right, father,’ Hancomb whispered. ‘Lend a hand.’

“The revulsion of feeling in the miller almost sent him over the brink, but in another moment the brave boy was standing beside him. Tears stood in the old man’s eyes as he folded his arms around his son.

“‘Tell me, Hancomb, how did you dodge ’em, and how did you get here?’



““Well, you see, father, when we had nearly reached the woods across the glade, I thought that if I could get rid of the dog there would be some chance of escape.’

““Yes; but there was the chance of being shot.’

““Well, I didn’t think of that. I thought if the dog followed closely he might not be able to stop himself on the smooth rocks; and that was just what happened. He was close at my heels. I stopped a second or two on the edge, and he came on faster than ever. I could see the narrow upper surface of a column, three or four feet below, and I jumped for it.

““Then I thought I was gone, for a large piece of rock gave way beneath me just as the dog bounded over my head. But I hung on with my hands, and then let myself down to the next ledge, about four feet lower. There I found a fissure and crept into it. The Tories could not see me.

““I heard them consulting. They said they

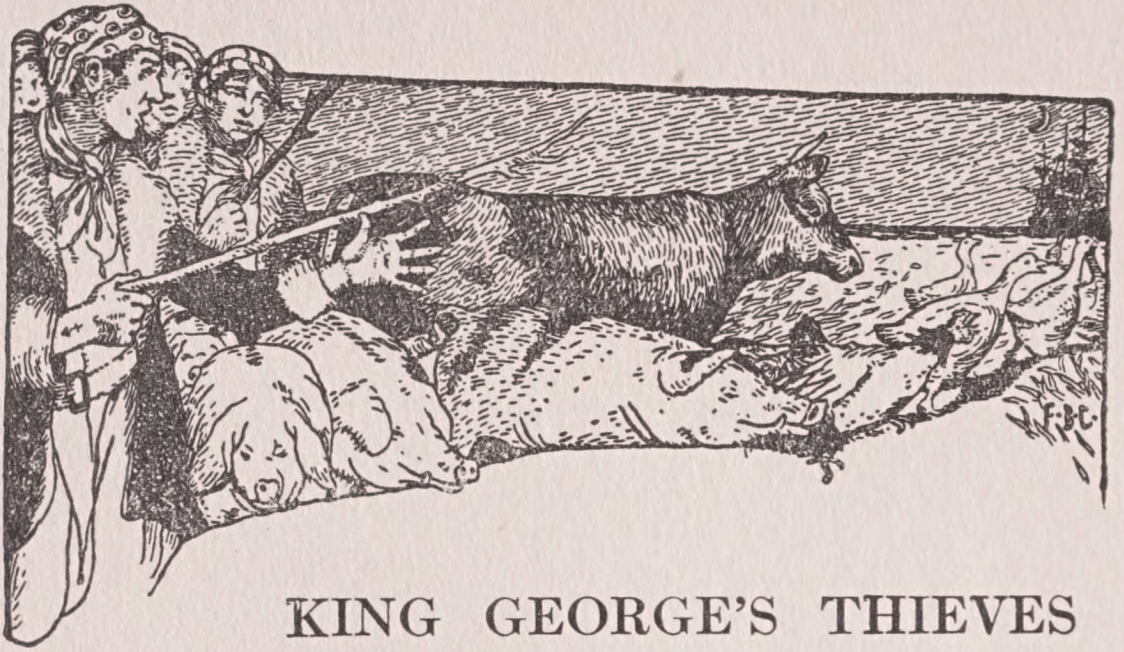


had had revenge enough, and one of us was in a grave four hundred feet deep; and they had no dog to find you. So I knew they were giving up the pursuit.'

"The saffron glow of morning was mantling the east as the Demarests, standing upon a rocky eminence, looked down upon their hill-side farm. The wind had died away, and in the still air columns of blue smoke rose from their ruined home. But the mill had been saved, and there the sisters were found nursing their wounded brother.

"A substantial mansion rose on the site of the burned house, and the old mill furnished many a goodly store of flour and meal to Washington's patriot army at Tappan."





## KING GEORGE'S THIEVES

"THE critter's gone!"

"*What?*"

"Clean gone, I tell ye!" repeated Uncle Tribby, dropping helplessly into a chair.

Aunt Gratitude's spoon had dropped, too, and its long wooden handle sank slowly down into the great bowl of "pumpkin" sauce she had been stirring. But she gave it not even a look; her eyes, dilated with horror until she could almost see over the rims of her spectacles, were fixed upon Uncle Tribby's white face, and he in his turn gazed at her, in as stony a despair as if he felt the world itself melting away from under his feet.



“She’s strayed away!” gasped Aunt Gratitude, as if the sound of her own words would help her to believe them; “why don’t ye go after her?”

“Go after her! Go down the throats of them cantankerous Britishers, that would go down Jonah’s whale’s in their turn, if they had their deserts. I heered there was a craft in the offing, just at day-dawn, yesterday, but they said she was steering for Merryweather Bay, and I thought that was the last of her, or I’d ha’ brought the heifer into the settin’-room, and locked her up in the cluset along with your mother’s chiny, afore I’d ha’ trusted her where she was for the night;” and Uncle’ Tribby—through much tribulation we enter into the kingdom, was his full name—groaned bitterly into the folds of his blue pocket-handkerchief.

“What, them miserable block-*heading* sailors?” Aunt Gratitude never could remember that *blockade* and *blockhead* were not spelled exactly alike. “I should think if they’re going to keep



everything decent out of the country, that was enough, without coming ashore themselves with their thievish tricks!"

"Tricks! Breaking the eight commandment at every barn-door, as if 'twas nothin' more'n a pipe-stem between their fingers! And that there heifer 't we'd only jest fairly got raised, and her mother dead and gone afore her, so there's no prospect in natur' of our ever bringing another forrard!"

Dead and gone old Whiteface truly was, and not much out of the course of nature it would seem, as her mother had set Uncle Tribby and Aunt Gratitude up at housekeeping nearly forty years before, and she in turn had presented them with the lamented heifer about eleven years previous to this doleful day.

But time had begun to seem short to Uncle Tribby, so many things were happening as he went along, and to-night, to add to all the rest. the mail-stage was to bring the five orphan



children of his daughter, Experience, to make their home at the old place.

“Fetch ’em home?” he had said; “of course, and if we haint got the widow’s cruise to feed ’em from, they needn’t starve, so long as there’s the heifer and the chickens to look to.”

But now! Uncle Tribby sat with the toe of his boot actually inside the sacred purity of his fallen milk-pail, gazing pitifully into Aunt Gratitude’s face, in search of some light on the future; but she could see no more than he could and so, with a way she had, she sprang vigorously into the present again.

“Well! I must finish the pies with yesterday’s milk. ‘Twont be so good, but it’s the last we shall ever have, and there’s a whole pound of that beet sugar in them already!”

Uncle Tribby groaned again. That “beet sugar,” the product of half his garden patch, was not going to last the five new mouths long, and the “blockhead” drew closer every day.



“Well, I’ll look after the pullets,” he said, at last, with a desperate effort to follow Aunt Gratitude’s example. Something shuffled as he moved off, and he looked down to find one foot fairly inside the milk-pail, but the nervous look he cast towards Aunt Gratty showed she hadn’t heard it; she was slowly bringing the lost spoon handle to light, with the half-whispered, “Such a thing never happened to her before in all her house-keeping!”

But a moment later she turned her head, and there stood Uncle Tribby again, his face ten times whiter than before, and the blue handkerchief crumpled wildly from one hand to the other.

“The fowl-critters is gone too! Every hen and chicken of ’em! There ain’t so much as a tail feather left of the whole lot!”

The jolly tars of His Majesty’s blockading ship *Scudder* had taken good care there shouldn’t be, and the white hen, and the speckled rooster,



and the black top-knot, with all her brood of pullets, had been "spliced" to the ragged little rope Uncle Tribby had used to tie the heifer, and thrown in a fluttering, gasping row across her back.

"Hope they won't crow Yankee Doodle too loud and wake the old folks," said the head of the party, as they made their triumphant procession down the yard; but Uncle Tribby had only stirred uneasily in his sleep, and the gate closed quietly behind his treasures.

But what did they see before them, all in white, just at the turn of the road? Not a company of ghosts, for the white was rather a pinky white, and scrambling backward and sideways, instead of waving majestically on. Only Goffer Galloway's whole litter of pigs, just old enough to roast, and more sailors stumbling clumsily over ditches and fences in pursuit.

And there was another line trailing through the pasture just beyond—Mother Humbledon's



turkeys, with now an indignant gobble, and then a snap at some sleepy grasshopper, while here, there, and everywhere, the white moonlight, falling across the fields and by-ways, was dotted with dark figures moving hurriedly along, on two legs or four, as nature had happened to supply them.

“Ship ahoy!” shouted the leader of the heifer. “What ship is that?”

“Lend a hand here, and you’ll find out!” answered brother Jack. “I’d rather fight all the Yankees that ever went to church in a meeting-house, than make a ship’s length more with these pesky pigs!”

“Every craft must handle her own guns; and heave ahead, my hearty, or yon Yankees will be waking up before we have time to eat their Thanksgiving dinner for them!” was the helpful answer; and heifer, pigs, turkeys, sailors, chickens, and all the rest, scrambled helter-skelter, at such speed as each could make, towards the



*Scudder*, which lay to, just off shore, her half-reefed canvas fluttering as sleepily in the breeze as if no thought of mischief could be abroad.

Squire Asnapper Withrington, the tithing-man of the village, was the terror of all the small boys on Sundays, as he stood in the aisle of the meeting-house with his long pole in his hand, ready to descend with a rap on the head of any offender who forgot his behavior for an instant; but on week-days he was everybody's kindest and most unfailing friend, and it was quite as a matter of course that the sufferers by the raid from the *Scudder* drew round his "keeping-room" fire the next night, almost imagining they saw their lost pigs and chickens trooping back to them, as they compared their woes over the freshly-heaped and crackling logs.

And freshly-heaped meant something in those days! The backlogs and forestick had been dragged in chains to the door that morning, by a stout yoke of oxen, and after they had been



rolled to their places on the hearth, filled in, and heaped between, and laid over with smaller logs, almost enough to build a house for a reasonable squatter in these times. And now the great glowing bed, where the remains of all this lay, was stirred and poked, and a quarter of a cord more thrown upon it, to crackle, and snap, and lick itself with the fiery tongues that crept out of it, as if it were the merriest thing in the world to be burned alive.

And the fireplace was wide enough and deep enough, after all that, for an armchair to stand at each end, just at a delicious distance from the ends of the logs, and in these chairs Goffer Galloway and Uncle Tribby were ensconced to-night out of respect to their age and their woes alike.

“How many o’ them critters of yours was there?” asked Uncle Tribby, across the crackling logs.

“Five!” piped Goffer Galloway, in a pitiful





"Not a word broke the serene dignity of the Rev. John."—Page 141







tone; "every mother's son of 'em. And I'd engaged one to Goodman Hathaway for a carding of wool, that was to have made a winter kirtle for my wife, and another to Ben Lufkin, as sails his father's fishing craft, and was to let us have a fish now and then the next six month, for the value of it. But they're gone, the hull lot, and the petticoat and the fish dinners went along with 'em!"

Goodman Hathaway, whose gray goose with all her goslings were also missing, gave an answering groan.

"I would the folk of Providence had felt called upon to mind their own business," he said. "afore they took upon themselves to board His Majesty's frigate and send it down Narragansett Bay in a blaze that set King George and all his court afire against us at the same time! All the tea thrown overboard in Boston served not to draw the blockade upon us like that matter."

"And what then?" exclaimed Goffer Gallo-



way, springing from his chair and almost dancing a three-legged jig on his rheumatic feet and his tall cane together. "Let them draw a blockade five hundred ship-of-the-line deep, and send their thievish sailors ashore as thick as the plague of flies in Egypt, and I could wish myself the man that touched the match to the frigate! Tea overboard! And it had turned every drop of water in the harbor to gall, and they had forced us to drink it, I could swallow my portion and call it sweet rather than see our rights taken from us and never speak like a man!"

A murmur of applause ran round the room, but after all, patriotism wasn't a thing to be eaten or drunk, and their thoughts would come round again to butter and eggs. One after another began to recount his losses, and at last all eyes turned appealingly to the squire, as if even in this extremity he might suggest something.

"Truly," he said, rising rather more quietly



than Goffer Galloway had done, "the fleet and the liberty given its sailors hath become a sore and grievous evil. We know how to take cheerfully such privations as cometh lawfully of the blockade, since that is to be expected by people who have offended their sovereign; but the spoiling of our goods by petty theft is irregular, and a sharp thing for free citizens to bear. And as frequent repetition beginneth to make it too grievous, my advice is, that a message be sent aboard some vessel of influence, to the effect that His Majesty's sailors are permitted to inflict wanton injury and great suffering upon his subjects, and remonstrances respectfully be made against the same."

Uncle Tribby's hair almost stood on end, and Goffer Galloway's chin slipped off the top of his cane, while a buzz of amazement and almost terror went round the room.

Board one of the blockading vessels to complain of their wrongs and demand their rights!



A fine thing it might be to complain that the British lion's teeth were too sharp, but who was going to put his head inside its mouth to say so?

Squire Withrington observed the look.

"I am verily in earnest," he said; "and as I see your hearts are faint, would suggest that a most meet and proper person to undertake the embassy be our parson, considering he hath left the kirk of Scotland but few years to reside among this rebellious people, and his name still standeth high among its dignitaries."

The parson! That put quite a different face on the question; and a murmur of approval said so quite distinctly, and a committee of three was chosen immediately to go and ask if he would dare the audacious deed.

Rev. John Murray, the eloquent and honored parson of the town, lived in a "square house" that stood, imposing with white paint, at the summit of a hill hard by, and thither the two



younger members of the trio scrambled with a haste that left poor Uncle Tribby panting for breath behind, and only able to overtake them just as the parson, simple in dress, but grand in towering proportions and kindly dignity, appeared at the door.

“Go?” he said, when he had listened to the appeals which Ben Lufkin, the foreman, managed to stammer out, “Go? Most certainly I will, at the coming of the very next vessel of the squadron, and shall consider it most meet and proper to make remonstrances against so unlawful grievance. But although it is true that my house doth overlook the harbor, I may be so engrossed in study as not to observe the coming of the enemy. Therefore let me know at any early hour, whenever sail be discovered to approach us, and I am ready.”

The parson was not left long to dream over his blue books undisturbed. Only two days had passed when a loud knock announced Ben Luf-



kin, with the news that a large ship was bearing directly towards the town.

"Bring your boat to the landing with a full crew to man her, and I will be there within an hour's time!" was the answer; and Ben sped away, trembling at now venturing to play second fiddle in this affair.

"I tell you, boys, the parson's got the pluck," he said, as he ranged his crew at their row-locks, "He drew himself up like a magistrate, hearing there were boys at his apple trees, or as if he had only a sermon to preach to greater sinners than sat before him on other days!"

"Mayhap his heart will fail him when we get fairly under the guns of the vessel," said Goffer Galloway's Sam.

"Never fear the parson! Why, only look at me, risking my boat and my chance of bread and water in the ship's hold for taking him out to her, and me as brave as a lion!" said Ben, looking decidedly pale, and holding his oar with a nervous



hand. In another moment he had dropped it, and fallen pell mell over to Jem's seat behind.

“Good land deliver us! There comes the Angel Gabriel down the hill:” The crew looked up, and, to be sure, a most strange and wondrous figure was approaching. Tall, erect, with long, white locks curling over the shoulders, drapery falling in majestic folds to the feet, and floating away like wings from each shoulder, something white at the throat, something blue on the head, and the whole moving slowly but unerringly towards the boat.

Nearer and steadily nearer, and before the terrified crew could do more than get Ben right side up again, the Rev. John had taken his seat among them, wig, gown, bands, scarf, bonnet and all; the full paraphernalia of the Scottish church, old and familiar dignities to him, but never before exhibited to the astonished eyes of his Yankee crew.

“Push off, boys!” whispered Ben. His orders





were obeyed, and with trembling but rapid stroke they made for the approaching vessel; but not with the astonishment all to themselves. The mate watched the nearing boat with wonder deepening into awe, as each moment showed him more distinctly the imposing figure seated in silent stateliness in her stern; and before she was fairly alongside he had descended the gangway, hat in hand, to re-

ceive whatever communication should be made.

The drapery of the Rev. John spread superbly in the breeze as he rose majestically to inquire,—

“What ship is this?”

“The flagship of His Majesty’s blockading fleet,” was the answer.



"Ah," said the Rev. John, "say to Admiral Toombs, then, that I wish to speak with him; and he calmly reseated himself, while the mate appeared hastily in the cabin with the news that there was a boat alongside containing a "personage" who desired to speak with the Admiral.

"And who is it?" asked the Admiral.

"I'm sure I can't imagine, sir, unless it may be the *Archbishop of Canterbury*."

"Let him come below," said the Admiral; and the Rev. John, wig, gown, and bands, righteous indignation and benign courtesy, all walked together in the cabin, the Admiral rising hastily and placing a chair for his guest.

Plash plash, went the oars of Ben Lufkin's boat, as he thanked his stars at taking himself and the parson home again in safety; and snap, crack, went the squire's fire as the sufferers from petty theft gathered round it again that night, but not a word broke the serene dignity of the Rev. John until, the company being complete, he rose to address them.



“Good friends and neighbors, I rejoice that in undertaking your embassy I should have fallen upon one so strong as an officer in authority, and at the same time so courteous and high-minded as a gentleman. The Admiral not only listened with all grave and suitable indignation to the story of your wrongs, but gave most positive orders in my presence against infliction of farther injury, under threat of most condign punishment. Nor is this all;” and the Rev. John poured slowly out upon the table a purse of glittering gold pieces.

“The Admiral regretted so deeply the wrong that has been done as to seem ill satisfied with promise for the future; and from his own private purse he sendeth this sum to be divided, so far as it may go, among those who could most ill afford their losses. Goffer Galloway, tell me the value of the young swine taken from your stable; and, Tribulation Perritt, let me know what it will cost to replace the animal you lost; and we will then proceed to other claimants.



A shout went up from every mouth. Good-wife Galloway had her winter kirtle, Uncle Tribby's new family lived sumptuously on butter and eggs once more, and from all the region round about no further complaints were heard to arise till the last of the "blockheading" fleet had disappeared beyond the line where sky and water meet.







## HEROES OF LAKE CHAMPLAIN

To know that Ticonderoga was in the hands of the British galled American pride. Yet there seemed no help for it. Burgoyne had captured the fort on the fifth of July, and when he moved on toward Albany he left a substantial garrison behind.

During the month that followed, no one dared say that the invasion would miss its purpose. Probably in those dark days some Americans were willing to forget the dramatic moment when Ethan Allen demanded the fort's surrender "in the name of the Great Jehovah and the Continental Congress"—so little hope they had of lowering that red-cross flag.

But in August, after General Stark and his



country boys won the battle of Bennington, hope revived. Washington was not alone in perceiving the weakness of Burgoyne's policy. The British commander was drawing near the heart of a hostile country. On all sides the patriots were flying to arms, and the end of the harvest would see almost every able-bodied man a soldier.

Yet Burgoyne was continually reducing his force—garrisoning outposts, sending off detachments to levy supplies or harass the settlements; and long before his main body reached Saratoga the patriots began to believe that they might cut off the outposts and defeat the detachments, and finally vanquish the great general himself.

It seemed essential to this plan that they should regain control of Lake Champlain and its fortifications. In September, Colonel Brown, with five hundred men, undertook the exploit. He surprised all the British posts between the



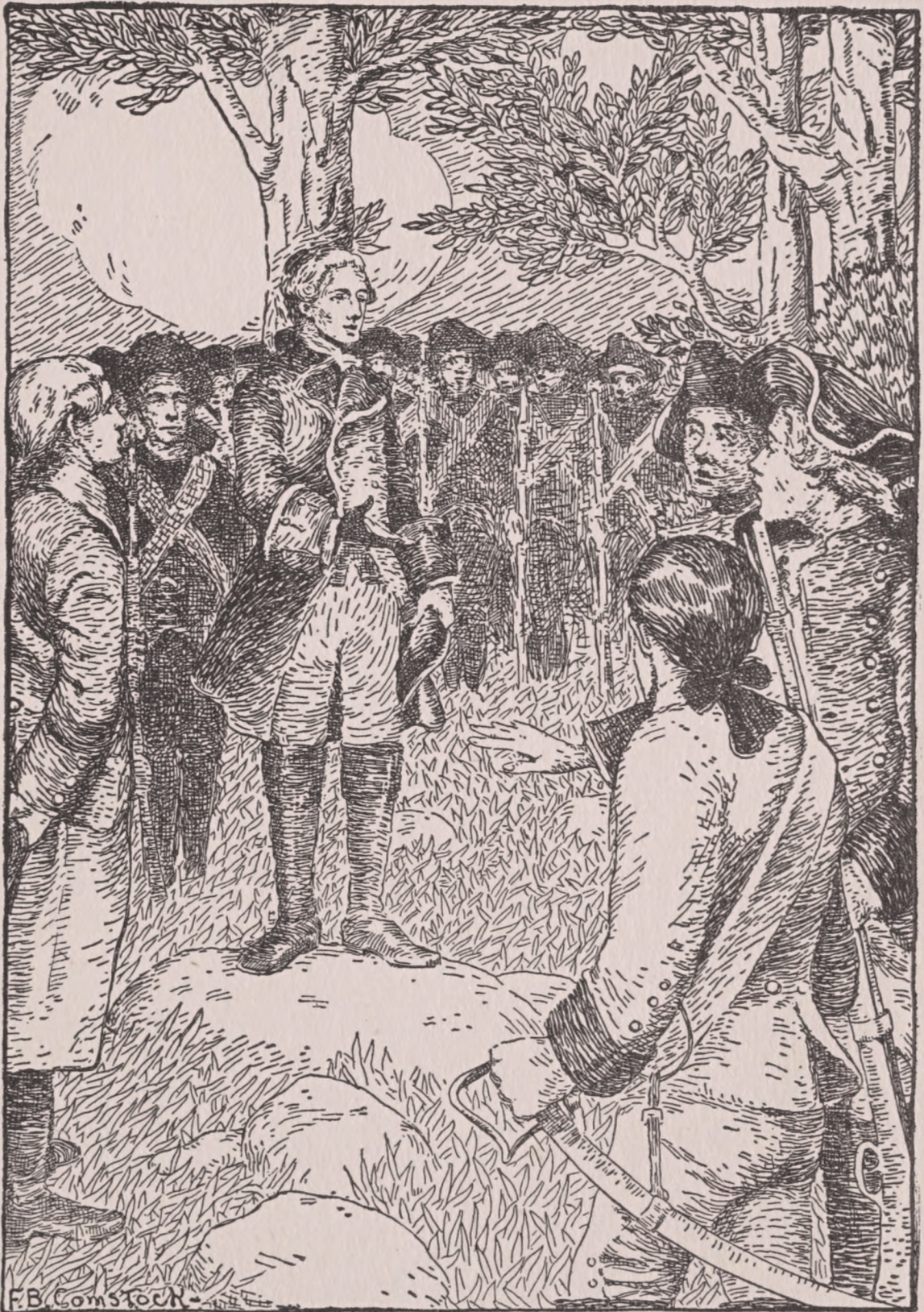
northern end of Lake George and the main body of the fortress at Ticonderoga.

Ticonderoga itself successfully resisted — so successfully that there was danger of a sortie upon his weary and battle-wasted soldiers; and his only reinforcements were on the other side of the lake, which the British, roused to activity by his presence, patrolled night and day.

It was under these circumstances that Colonel Brown called his men together on a certain September afternoon. Discipline was not so strict in the camp of the Continentals as in a modern army, and perhaps some hint of his purpose had already gone abroad. One Ephraim Webster was not sobered by the knowledge—if he possessed it; but others saw farther than their light-hearted comrade, and heard their commander's words as befitted serious men.

“I must communicate with General Lincoln,” the colonel said, when he had pictured the situation as clearly as he could. You know what





“Who will volunteer to risk his life for his country.”—Page 149







that means. Two men must swim the lake. Two, because they may be able to help each other, and, because one may be captured, and the despatches must not fail. I shall not order any man to do this. Who will volunteer to risk his life for his country?"

"I'll go for one!"

"Ephraim Webster. Good!" The Colonel looked with critical approval at the stout young fellow who stepped from the ranks so gaily. "Thank you, Webster," he added; "it's no frolic, I promise you. But you were at Bunker Hill; you know a soldier's duty!"

"Who'll go with Webster?" he asked, a moment later. "I realize the peril, men. You may drown. The British may shoot you, hang you, perhaps. But there's a chance of getting through and saving the campaign. Who volunteers?"

A man of Webster's age, but less strongly built than he, came quietly forward.



“Richard Wallace,” the commander hailed him. “I knew Vermont would not stay behind New Hampshire. Your townsfolk in Thetford will be proud, Wallace, when they hear of their neighbor’s deed!”

“Come to my tent an hour before sunset,” Colonel Brown ordered, as he dismissed the force. “Between this time and that, the day is yours.”

It was doubtless a kindly impulse that prompted their comrades to leave Webster and Wallace to themselves. The two volunteers strolled away aimlessly toward the woods. Webster’s bold, black eyes, roving on every side, found material for jest and laughter in all the appointments of the camp. Wallace’s mood was almost sombre.

“I ought to have left it to some one else, Ephraim,” he said mournfully, at length. “I don’t know as I can do it.”

“Nonsense, Dick! Haven’t I seen you swim farther, just for fun?”



“P'r'aps; but not in September—with the night chill on the water.”

“You'll be warm enough after we get started. I've known you to feel just the same way before we went into a fight; but you didn't run, did you? I ain't afraid of you, Dick!”

Nor was the officer who, at Colonel Brown's order, went with them, later on, to advise in the choice of the route. While the daylight lasted, the three climbed a hill that commanded the lake. Upon Champlain, sparkling and dimpling in the slant sunlight, seemed activity.

The British fleet was on the alert. Evidently the shores on either side were constantly watched. At that moment, signals were passing between the flagship and Ticonderoga. While the patriots looked on they saw the patrol-boat threading amongst the larger craft, and remembered that she would be even more vigilant when darkness fell.

“The distance across is about a mile at this



point," the officer observed. "By the course you must take, it will be nearer two. Strike northeast and round that upper gunboat. Then—if I were you—I'd head for that point of woods. You'll probably find Lincoln's camp south of the fort. There'll be British, I guess, between you and it. Better start right for it, without waiting for daylight, if—if—"

"That's so!" laughed Webster. "The red-coats can see too far when the sun shines. Eh. Dick?"

Wallace made no reply. The sense of responsibility that weighs upon a thoughtful man when he attempts an enterprise which concerns the fortunes of others disposed him to silence.

But the officer knew that one who dares a danger he has clearly foreseen is not likely to be overwhelmed by it. When they parted at the shore, a few hours after, he saw that there was no need to exhort either to be brave and bold.

The night came cloudily and with a late moon.



The gentle breeze that had rippled all day through the tree-tops died with the sun. The warmth of the day seemed to vanish as quickly. There was an autumnal sharpness in the quiet air that pierced to the bone.

“I dread cramp more’n I do the British!” Webster said, through chattering teeth, as he rolled up his clothing.

Now that the time for action had come, Wallace had no more doubts. “We’ll get warm in the water,” he answered, cheerfully.

Their friendly officer helped them to fasten their bundles of clothing by cords that crossed from the forehead to the back of the neck. Then he shook hands with them, silently and solemnly there in the darkness, and the volunteers dropped into the black water in the shadow of the overhanging boughs, and began the long struggle across the lake.

They swam with long, steady strokes, husbanding their strength. Though they kept together,



they exchanged few words. The night was very still. Occasional sounds from the vessels came so sharply to the swimmers that the fear of betraying their own presence set a seal on their lips.

And Wallace was busy with his thoughts. Born in Nova Scotia in 1753, he had come, as a very young man, to Vermont, and when the colonies rebelled against the king had cast his lot with his new friends. Now under the starless sky his mind went back to the old home in the east; but the life with the loyalists seemed, somehow, strangely remote, when one was risking life in the patriot's cause!

Impelled by his reflections, which were merrier perhaps, Webster had quickened *his* pace and left Wallace behind. The British vessels were around him. They showed few lights, save from the officers' quarters; and it was easy to avoid these beams that made infrequent pathways through the gloom.



Clear of the ships, Webster delayed for his friend. It was unsafe to call to him. He would not have waited so calmly had he known that at that moment Wallace was facing death. Yet so it was.

The danger threatened from an unlooked-for source. A sudden incautious movement had thrown the cord from Wallace's forehead. The weight of the bundle of clothing drew and tightened it around his throat.

"As though the British had me at the yard-arm!" he muttered.

It seemed a simple thing to release himself,



"They swam with long, steady steady strokes."



and he smiled at his own grim joke as, treading water, he put his hand to the cord. The first effort showed him that this was no laughing matter. The knot was out of reach. The cord seemed momentarily to contract and slip from him as he strove to replace it.

One of the smaller gunboats was just ahead of him. A bell sounded. He heard the watch call the hour and cry, "All's well!" All well! And he was strangling!

A formless shape swept across the darkness and his tortured senses were conscious of the gentle dip of muffled oars. The patrol-boat was on her rounds. Life was sweet. A few strokes would take him to the boat. There he would find help, aye, a welcome! The British would not harm him if he revealed the patriots' plans. Yet when the suggestion was fairly before him, his conscience revolted. Better die than betray his country!

There was a ringing in his ears. Sparks of



flame shot across his field of vision. But in his fierce impatience at his own weak thought, he made a last desperate clutch at the cord—and lifted it. The next moment it was in place, and he realized that he was free to go forward.

He made his way, with effort, to the nearest vessel and held himself up by her cable while he drew in long breaths of the cool night air.

His strength returned, and with it came the consciousness that this was no safe resting-place. He slipped into the water and paddled away. Presently a faint whistle guided him to Webster.

“All right, Dick?” Webster asked.

“All right.”

It was time to turn southward, and they took the new course, though in the impenetrable blackness of the night that was half a matter of chance. For ten minutes they held it without incident. Then there broke out in the fleet an uproar that almost persuaded them they were discovered.



Shots were fired, and they heard the noise of boats getting away. But the lights showed that these were moving toward the western shore, whence the patriots had come; and the relief of that knowledge brought renewal of vigor.

Weeks after, they learned that a deserter had tried to swim ashore and had drowned when nearly within reach of safety. And then they perceived that if he had left his ship but a little earlier the pursuit would have resulted in their capture.

Ignorant as they were of such cause for thankfulness, the moments dragged on. The two miles lengthened to almost three. The lake became a force to be resisted, as well as an obstacle to be overcome.

But at last, for the leader, the long swim ended. Just as Wallace touched a bough that overhung the water, he heard his comrade's voice, sounding faint and far away.

"Help, Dick! I'm sinking!"



An instant served Wallace to jump ashore, break off the branch and plunge in again. A second, feebler cry led him to Webster; and the next moment saw the drowning man and his rescuer on dry land.

Cramp had assailed Webster, and he was helpless. Wallace opened their bundles and rubbed him until the circulation was restored. When he was able to stand, they set off in search of their friends.

The moon had risen while they lingered, and though the forest was pathless, and dark enough at best, they made fair progress. They had but a vague idea of General Lincoln's whereabouts; yet it seemed that following the direction they had taken they must sooner or later reach him.

An hour went by, and the toilsome tramp showed no result. All at once, from a clump of trees came the harsh challenge, "Who goes there?"

They made no answer.



Webster, who led, stooped and gathered a handful of earth, his purpose clearly in mind. They knew they must be very near the friend or enemy who had spoken, and with fast-beating hearts they stood still and waited his next movement.

It was no long wait. There was a flash and a crackle, a birch-bark torch flared into a blaze, and by the light they saw that their challenger was a British sentinel.

Webster threw his handful of earth with steady aim. It smote the torch to the ground and extinguished it. The sentry discharged his piece, but the bullet whistled harmlessly past them.

Before the report had ceased to echo, they were far away from the spot, running with that long, swinging, and almost noiseless stride that marks the trained woodsman.

There was no pursuit—or, if any, it took the wrong course. Unmolested, they skirted



the fortifications on Mount Independence, and still scatheless, they turned toward the lake again.

Thus they went, till the night seemed endless and the quest hopeless. They pushed on doggedly for theirs was not the temper which succumbs; but the rough road and their aching limbs made every step a torture. They wondered at times *why* they endured, and whether these blind wanderings would ever find an end; yet neither complained. When they spoke, in whispers, it was only to cheer each other with hope and speedy arrival.

“Halt! Who goes there?” brought them to a sudden stand, when they were almost spent.

“Friends!” Webster answered recklessly.

“Advance, friends, and give the countersign!”

It was a moment of desperate anxiety. They were discovered. They doubted that strength would serve them for another dash through the woods. What to do? It was with hardly any



hope, save that of gaining time, that Wallace demanded:

“Whose friends are you?”

And then the patriots learned that the long night of effort had come to a happy end, when the invisible sentry said, in the earnest voice of an honest man: “America’s! God bless her!”

Such was the story that my companion told me while we traced the lines of Ticonderoga and, overlooking the beautiful lake, recalled the glorious memories that cluster around the place.

It is in essentials a true story. Wallace and Webster are no fictitious heroes, and in all important details this recital follows established facts.

In the immediate and practical sense, their exploit had no result. Nothing noteworthy came of the message to General Lincoln. After Burgoyne surrendered at Saratoga, October 17, the



British, of their own motion, abandoned the lake forts.

Yet we know that a noble deed is never wasted. The man who performs it sets a new star in the sky. Because we can look up to it, we are better citizens, truer Americans, than we would be if Wallace and Webster had not ventured their lives for their country a hundred years ago.







## NATHAN HALE

### AMERICA'S BOY-SOLDIER MARTYR

IN 1775 a little boy was born at Coventry, Conn., and in the pretty home of Dr. Hale and his wife every one insisted that such a beautiful boy had never been seen anywhere before. The good doctor named his tiny son Nathan, and as the child grew older he became noted all through the colony for the wonderful beauty of his face and for the gentleness and sweetness of his nature. Little Nathan was a remarkably clever boy, too, with a high sense of honor and a splendid courage that often made the old father rest his hand on the bright head and dream wonderful dreams of what he would become by and by. All these bright dreams seemed likely to be realized, too; for the beautiful child grew into a



brilliant, handsome youth, who made a marvelous record at school and was able to enter Yale when he was in his sixteenth year. In the college it was the same old story of his childhood repeated. The boy's handsome face and brilliant mind, but above all else his noble, generous nature, charmed every one who came about him, and he was the best beloved pupil in the college, not only by his fellow-students but by the faculty as well. Nathan graduated with the highest honors when he was only eighteen, and then indeed did the parents at Coventry feel that all their plans for the boy's future were coming true. He was so noble and gifted, so pure and true that the father and mother hoped he would consecrate his life to the God who had so richly endowed him, and enter the ministry. And as they sat in their home planning for their loved one, nothing told them how soon all that glorious promise, all that brilliant young life was to be cut off by the hangman's rope.



The old doctor and his wife were still dreaming their dreams when the War of Independence broke out, and among the very first to shoulder his gun was their son, Nathan. He was an impetuous patriot, and his speeches aroused the wildest enthusiasm among the young men of his neighborhood. "We must march immediately and never lay down our arms until we have won our independence!" he cried one day at a great political meeting; and when he sat down nearly every young man there came forward and volunteered for immediate service.

At this time he was but a few months from college, where he had endeared himself to all. His taste for study, and for the best study, was distinctly formed—and even in the scanty record we have of his short life, it is clear that he was using books, and the best books, thoroughly carefully, and in every way well. Of that class in Yale College, many men gave themselves fully and freely to the country's service. The



young men of Yale and of Harvard flung themselves into the army, as they did in these later years of another war for liberty. It is a noteworthy fact, indeed, that, like all great struggles for popular rights, it was a war fought by young men. Lafayette was only a boy when he joined the staff of Washington, and he found for comrades boys near his own age. Hamilton, indeed, was younger than he. Washington himself, whom they so venerated as a father, was in his forty-fourth year when the war began. Ward, who was superannuated as an old man unfit for command, was forty-eight when he was superseded. Knox was but twenty-five when the war began, and many of his companions were not thirty. The young republic needed young blood, and she found it. She was willing to avail herself of the tried wisdom of a Trumbull and a Franklin. She was not afraid to trust the young enthusiasm of a Hamilton and a Hale.



As yet Nathan was in the eye of the law a minor, and was not, therefore, technically a "freeman" and entitled to take part in public affairs. But he was enrolled in the militia, and he was profoundly interested in the military discipline which the time required. It was his prominence in the community, as a favorite with the young, which permitted one not yet of age to speak at the meeting called after the battle of Lexington. He enrolled himself as a volunteer, wrote to Coventry for his father's permission to serve in one of the companies of the new establishment, and having, of course, received that permission from the sturdy patriot, enlisted in Webb's regiment, the Seventh Connecticut, and asked the proprietors of the school where he was teaching to excuse him from future duty. In this regiment Nathan was first lieutenant; and, after the 1st of September, captain. The company consisted of seventy-one men, and after some service in the neighbor-



hood of New London, was marched, by Washington's orders, to the camp at Cambridge.

We have his brief diary of the march of the detachment. It passed through Rehoboth and Dedham to Roxbury, where young Hale's company encamped on the evening of September 26. They were afterward transferred to Cambridge and Charlestown, and encamped at the foot

of Winter Hill. It was here that General Put-



nam after grimly retiring from Bunker Hill on the 17th of June, said that he would be willing to

"We must never lay down our arms  
until we have won our  
independence."



sell another hill to King George at the same price. There was no lack of hills in America. Winter Hill was the next hill; and here, for most of the winter, Webb's regiment was posted.

Hale's account of the way in which he and his men spent that autumn and winter is in itself an interesting contribution to one of the most interesting periods of our history. Of that whole winter, the greatest success was not a feat of arms. It was the success, not to be paralleled, hard to understand or believe, by which one army was disbanded and another enlisted, in the face of an enemy of equal, if not superior, numbers. The besieging army was virtually an army of minute men while the year 1775 lasted. After New Year's day, in the year 1776, it was an army of men enlisted by the Continent, and enlisted, in most instances, for the war.

Hale gave his own pay to his men to induce them to enlist, then borrowed from Captain Leavenworth enough money to go home with



giving him an order for his pay to January, and returned to his father's house. He went home to enlist a new company there. One month of that frank, friendly, loyal zeal of his was enough, and, on the 27th of January, 1776, the boy, not yet of age, arrived with recruits who enlisted for the war.

Nathan Hale made a splendid soldier, boy though he was in years, as his promotion to captaincy for gallant conduct on the field before many months proved. Not long after this, many of his comrades became dissatisfied with the poor rations and hard fighting, and some of them said they were going back home. This roused all the fire and patriotism of the "boy captain," as he was called, and he made them a speech which caused the poor-spirited fellows to cringe, so full was it of love for his country and bitter contempt for those who would desert her in her dire need. He wound up by offering to give them whatever pay might be coming



to him if they would not disgrace themselves by returning home. All these things came to the ears of the great commander-in-chief; and gradually, when any hazardous enterprise was to be undertaken, requiring perfect faithfulness to duty and a courage that quailed at nothing, Captain Hale was sent for. Once, when the Continental army was starving, news came that a British ship filled with provisions was anchored out in East River, under the protection of a war vessel. "Our men are dying for food out there; we must have it," General Washington said to his youthful captain, who looked a boy in spite of his officer's uniform.

"I'll get it for you, sir," was the prompt reply; and that night, with a few picked men, Nathan Hale entered a little whaleboat and rowed out to the big ship. His men were well trained, and, in spite of the overwhelming numbers on the vessel, they boarded her, captured the guard, and brought the ship to shore, where the food was distributed among the half-starved soldiers.



His short life was full of noble deeds, but the death he chose to die was the grandest thing Nathan Hale ever did. In 1775, when he was barely twenty, Captain Hale was called to meet Washington at headquarters, in New York City, and the lad went gladly, little dreaming what was to be asked of him. The affairs of the Americans were in a pretty bad way at that time, and it was absolutely necessary that a trustworthy person go into the enemy's camp, on Long Island, and find out all about them, what their numbers were, and how strong were the fortifications they had erected. Washington did not order the boy to go; he merely laid the desperate need of information before him, and then, almost ere the words left his lips, the young officer was on his feet, crying, "I'll go, sir."

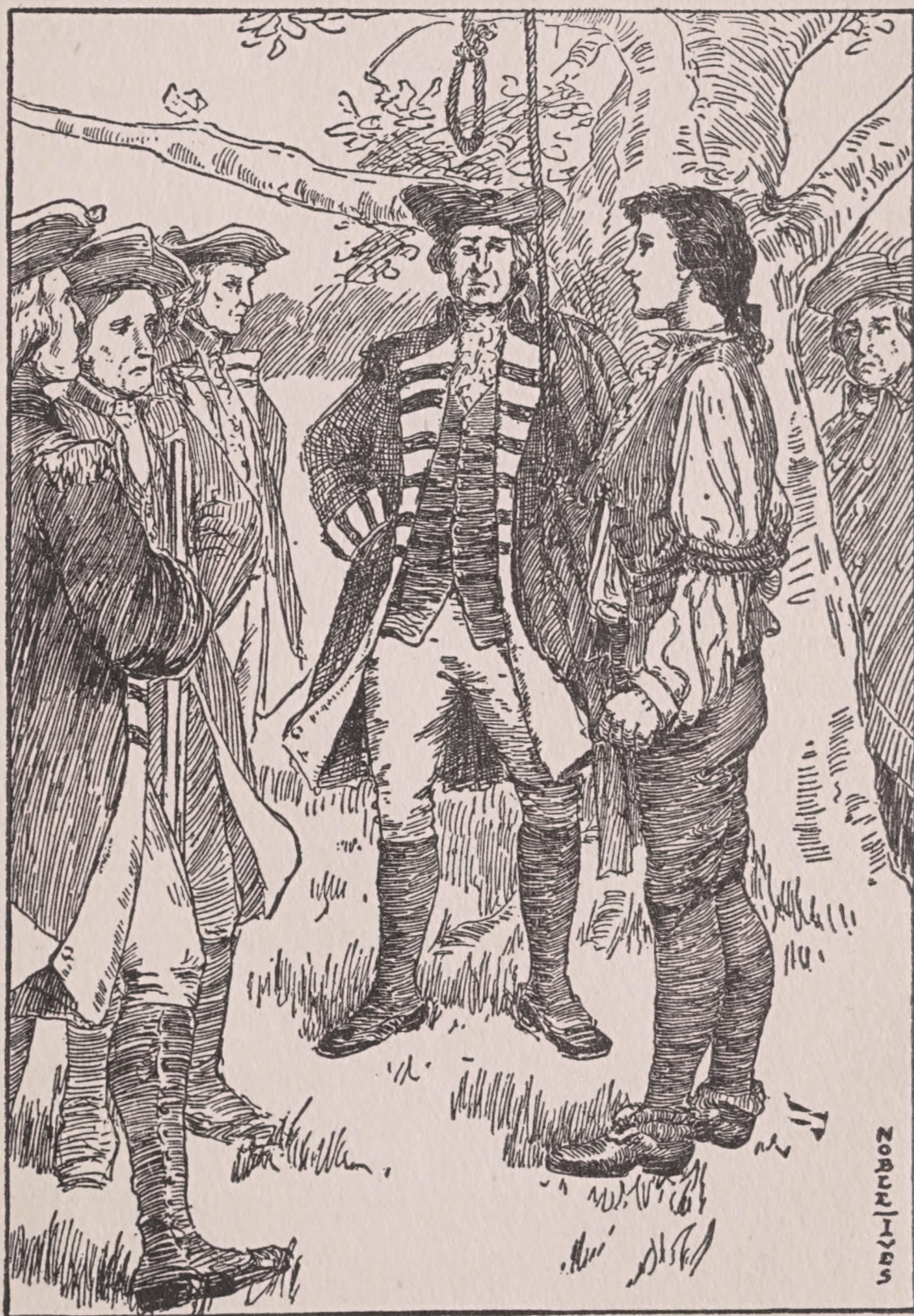
The generous offer was accepted, and then a great clamor arose among the lad's comrades, all of whom loved him devotedly. If a spy is discovered during war times he is either shot or



hanged at once, and from all sides came vigorous protests against Nathan's deliberately taking such a desperate risk. "I know the danger full well, and what the result will be if I am captured," he said firmly just before he left the camp, "but I am perfectly willing to take the risk for my country."

He disguised himself as a Dutch schoolmaster, entered the British camp, and obtained the information desired by his commander. He also secured drawings of the fortifications, which he concealed in his shoe. Everything seemed to be going well, and he was preparing to return to his own camp when he was discovered. A cousin of his, who was a bitter enemy of the Americans, recognized him, and at once betrayed him to the British, the drawings hidden in his shoe making all defense impossible. He was hanged the next morning at sunrise, and met his terrible fate as bravely as he had faced the enemy's guns on the battlefield. His execution-





“I only regret that I have but one life to give to my country.”—Page 177







ers did not even allow him to see a minister before he went to the scaffold. The brutal Cunningham also tore up in his presence the last letter the condemned boy had written to his parents, saying in explanation of the cruel act, "It was necessary, so the rebels might not know they had a man who could die so bravely."

Hale's last words, when told by Cunningham, in derision, to speak to the people, were: "I only regret that I have but one life to give to my country."

Thus ended a martyr's life. Hardly three months had passed since he was twenty-one years old.





## CAPTAIN BEMAN'S EXPLOIT

THE visitor to the Brooklyn Navy-Yard should not consider his errand accomplished until he takes his stand next the river, and looking out over the Wallabout, recalls something of the sad history connected with this little bay.

Here, in October, 1776, was moored a British prison-ship, the *Whitby*, crowded with American patriot prisoners, termed rebels by the English. Six months later two other floating jails joined the *Whitby*, and within a year both were burned, one in October, 1777, the other in February, 1778.

Although no trustworthy record of the facts in the case was kept, hundreds of feeble and dying men are believed to have perished in these



fires. Certain it is that the one in February occurred in the night when the weather was intensely cold, so that, if efforts were made to save the prisoners, no more than partial success was possible.

In April, 1778, the *Falmouth*, the *Hope* and the "infamously famous old *Jersey*" were anchored in the Wallabout and filled with captives from the American armies. The severity of their confinement was such that more than eleven thousand are believed to have died of cold, starvation and malignant diseases.

The adjacent hillsides, now graded down and included in the city of Brooklyn, became a vast cemetery where these brave patriots were hastily piled into shallow graves and slightly covered with earth. In 1808 a tomb was built to their memory, and a great quantity of their bleached bones were collected and interred within it, with solemn ceremonies, in the presence of vast throngs of people. Over the main door to this structure was inscribed:



“Portal to the Tomb of Patriot Prisoners who died in prison-ships during the Revolution.”

It is not surprising that among such a host of liberty-loving prisoners there should have been some who made bold attempts at escape. Not many were successful, yet by fearful risks and hardships a few eluded their keepers reached home and friends, and after a short rest, again joined the patriot forces in the field. Of these escapes, one of the boldest was led by a young Connecticut captain, Abel Beman, a cousin of Nathan Beman of Vermont, the boy who guided Col. Ethan Allen into Fort Ticonderoga when he captured it from the British.

Although Abel Beman was a very small man, he seemed to condense in his little frame the well-known strength and endurance of his almost gigantic kinsman, which, combined with indomitable courage and will, was no doubt the reason for his selection as captain in the



Colonial army. But the qualities of the man were not on the surface, for at twenty-five he was as beardless and boyish as a lad of sixteen, and among his friends was often called "Boy Beman."

By some misfortune of war he and his company were captured and imprisoned on the *Whitby* in the Wallabout. Here he bided his time, and for many months watched for an opportunity to escape.

Meanwhile he played before the guards the role of a harmless, dull-witted fellow, and his large hazel eyes, smooth face, and simple manner gained for him many favors sternly refused to other prisoners. He was freely allowed in every part of the ship, and often assisted the guards in various ways and even handled their guns and accoutrements with innocent familiarity.

Thus ingratiating himself into their confidence, he readily became conversant with the details of his prison and the methods of the officers,



and shrewdly studied the temper and efficiency of each with a view to discovering a way to freedom.

A score of plans suggested themselves, but the circumstances surrounding him were desperate and forbidding. Three soldiers with loaded muskets stood at each end of the ship, and a row of them lined the rail on either side. Around the shores of the bay stretched a cordon of pickets, while several frigates were moored in the river, and bristled with shotted cannon ready to bellow away at any moment. But for the vast magnitude of these difficulties he would have liberated all the prisoners on the *Whitby*, over a thousand in number. Indeed, one magnificent attempt was made, but failed.

On a dark night the guards were overcome and confined below decks without a shot or an outcry; then the anchors were lifted and the ship was allowed to drift, in the hope that she would run ashore somewhere and afford an opportunity



for the Americans to escape. But the rattling of a chain in raising the anchors reached the ears of the night officer on one of the frigates, and before the *Whitby* had fairly begun to move a yawl filled with marines came alongside, and the undertaking was frustrated.

But so enfeebled by rigid confinement and low diet were most of the prisoners that probably many of them would have perished even had they escaped. They had not endurance to march across the country to their friends. Thus it was plain that any attempt at a general escape would defeat itself.

Finally, Beman decided to include a few only of his hardier comrades, and hoped by quietness and swiftness to get off without awaking much opposition. To this end he selected the seven of his companions best fitted for the attempt, and rehearsing his plans to them, obtained their hearty support.

All things having been carefully considered,



Beman awaited a favorable occasion to undertake the perilous adventure.

The chance did not come until one rainy and dismal day late in October. Fog rendered objects a few rods distant quite invisible. The boat from headquarters, delayed by the fog and an unusually strong tide, was late in reaching the *Whitby*, and arrived just as the guards were changing. The circumstances were favorable—a fact for which Abel Beman had been inwardly praying all day.

When the boat touched the ship the officer sprang up the side, bearing written orders in his hand. Shouting back to an oarsman to follow him with a basket brought from the city he hurried to the cabin.

Just then the day guards were being called away and the night guard told off in their places. To add to the haste and confusion of the scene, the prisoners were purposely restless and noisy, surging about the deck as if to keep warm, and shouting in the most boisterous manner.



Whispering to one of his seven companions, a very tall man, to reach up and get a pair o' oars from a galley overhead, Beman, with a boyish, good-natured smile and a remark to the remaining oarsman, sprang over the side into the boat. Reeling as if about to fall, he exclaimed childishly, "Here, catch hold of my hand!"

The boatman, evidently pitying him, sprang forward, seized his hand and gently drew him toward a seat in the stern. But this was a fatal mistake for the oarsman, for like a flash the little American captain grappled the bulky Britisher,



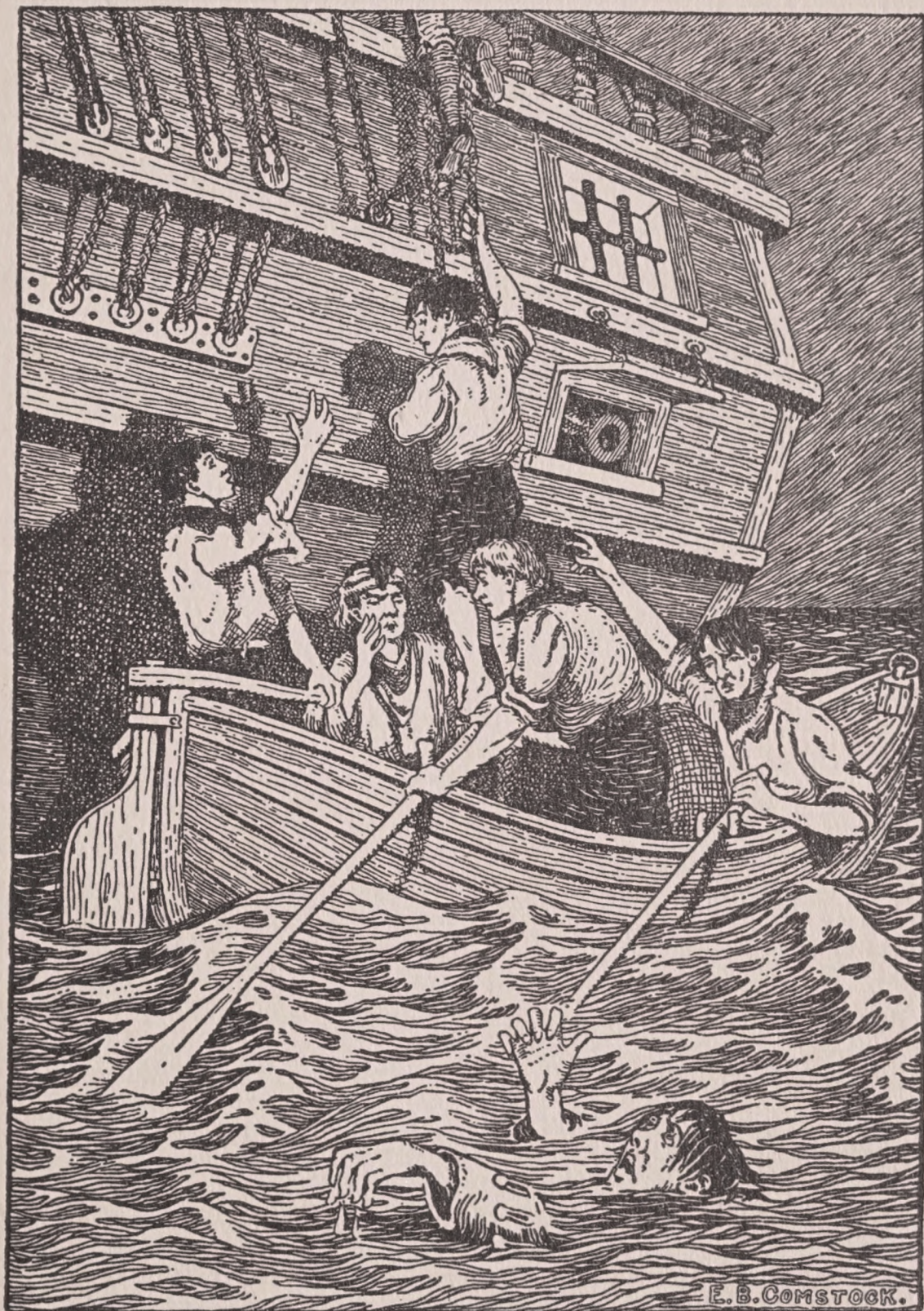


overturned him, and plunged him into the river. At the same second the guard posted at the gangway came down head first also, gun and all hurled by the prisoners on deck into the water. Then, gliding down, like so many swift shadows, came the seven grim followers of the daring dwarf, and all except those who were to wield the oars squatted in the bottom of the galley. Beman stood in the stern as steersman to direct their course.

With the utmost force and order they pulled away with the tide northward into the dense fog. Just as they were vanishing from sight one of the guards on deck discovered them, and with a cry of "Halt, there! Halt!" discharged his musket at them. The next moment several guards fired, but with such uncertainty on account of the fog that the fugitives were untouched, although shots pierced their clothing.

Now they were concealed in the mist, and all was uproar behind them. Every guard was





Gliding down, like so many swift shadows, came the seven grim followers of the daring dwarf."—Page 186







bawling, "Rebels escaped! Rebels escaped!" The officers were rushing about, shouting hoarse commands to fire, to let down the *Whitby's* boats and pursue, and to do any number of other absurd things. As soon as information reached the nearest frigate her guns began to thunder as she swept with grape-shot the surface of river and shore in the direction in which the fugitives had fled.

But the Americans were too shrewd to continue their flight in the track of these deadly missiles. They knew well that they would be not only fired upon but pursued as soon as the British could man their boats. So, when the fugitives were fully out of sight in the fog, Beman steered the galley directly across East River to its western shore; and as it was night by this time, they turned their course in the opposite direction from what their pursuers would take, and silently skirting Manhattan Island southward, rowed completely around the little city of New York.



This was an extremely hazardous thing to do, for the course carried them close along the front of the Battery and under the very guns of several big frigates. Now and then they were hailed by sentinels from land or ship, but Beman, having prepared himself to answer by questioning guards and officers on the *Whitby*, replied in such a way as to avert all suspicion.

Within an hour or so the galley struck into North River, and here the tide was running in their favor, for it set northward in a mighty current. Before morning they were beyond danger, and within a few days had arrived, some at Washington's headquarters, and others at their homes. While their pursuers were searching the stretches of East River and the shores of the Sound for them, these Yankee rebels were marching triumphantly onward to enlist again in the struggle for liberty.

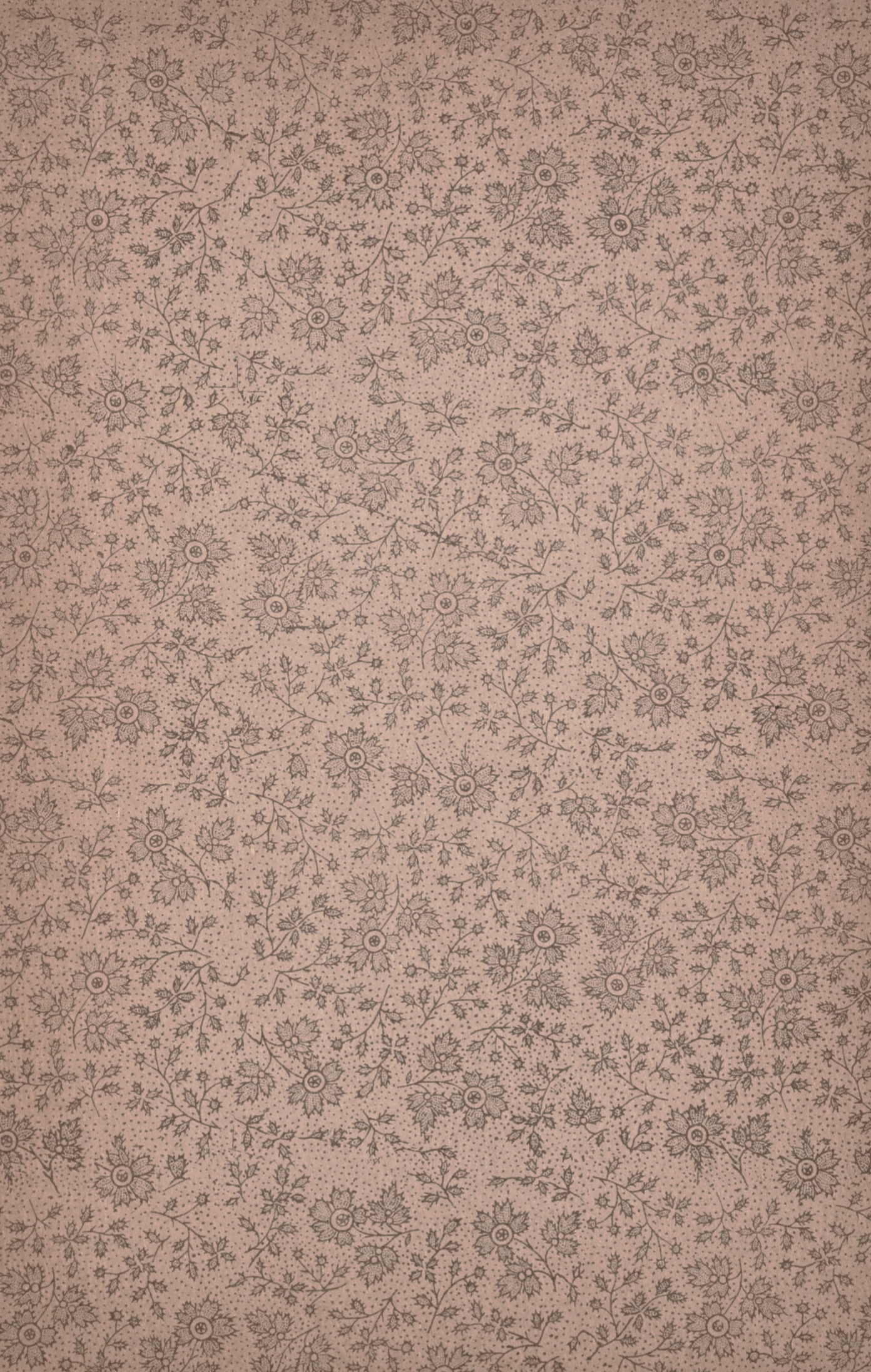






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